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Children's Rights and Parenting Beliefs: A Study of Attitudes, Values and Emotions.

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Abstract

The conceptualization of childhood has changed over the centuries and appears to be undergoing further change in our post-modern culture. While the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child is designed to give children everywhere basic human rights while taking into consideration their special needs, no recent research has examined adult attitudes toward those rights. In an attempt to understand the attitudes adults hold regarding autonomy rights and to look for some factors that could predict those attitudes, the current study considers values, parenting style, emotions and the issue of parent status as possible predictor variables. A total of 90 participants took part in the research, which had both written and interview components. Results generally failed to establish a reliable set of predictors. However, some interesting information was obtained regarding the endorsement of children's autonomy rights and some general conclusions were reached about our view of children and their rights at the end of the twentieth century.

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Introduction

In 1989 the United Nations drafted its Convention on the Rights of the Child. This comprehensive document is an attempt to provide the children of the world with the basic human rights accorded to us all, while at the same time recognizing the unique nature of childhood itself and the need to protect and foster healthy development. In spite of this noble attempt, children still do not enjoy all the rights set forth in this Convention. While North American society has secured the rights of children in many areas, there are still areas where children remain vulnerable. Why might this be so? What is it about children's rights that make it difficult for governments and citizens to adopt the articles of the Convention wholeheartedly? To answer this question, we need to look at what adults feel about children's rights and to try to find, if possible, an explanation for the lack of will to ratify these rights into our own Charter.

This thesis is an attempt to shed some light on the way adults perceive children's rights. To gain this insight, adults were surveyed and interviewed about their feelings and attitudes. Both parents and non-parents were included in this study. In an effort to look for explanations for differing attitudes, variables such as preferred style of parenting, values with regard to children, and understanding of and expectations around children's development were examined. As well, the emotional nature of the issue of children's rights was also studied.

There is a long standing tradition in North American culture that a child's best interests can only be determined by adults. This paternalist sentiment has been with us for generations and although some might claim it is not the force it once was, it still appears to pervade our approach to children. Is paternalism still with us? Is this why we are reluctant to grant children a wider set of rights than they now possess? In this paper, I seek to speak to this issue as well. Any discussion of children's rights and adult's attitudes regarding those rights must of necessity start with an examination of how conceptions of childhood and children's rights have evolved over time.

The Conception of Childhood in Western Culture

The conception of childhood in Western culture at the mid-point of the twentieth century could be characterized by three fundamental attributes (Archand, 1993). First, children were set apart from adults in work, play and the law, with different behavioural expectations for children. Second, children were seen as passing through a stage on their way to adulthood. The stage was subdivided into infancy, middle childhood and adolescence, with an explicit set of gains at each step. Third, childhood was seen as a state of innocence, an empty state of not knowing.

Historian Philippe Aries's (1962) examination of the evolution of the "idea" of childhood provides an overview of how Western culture came to regard children in this way. Aries (1962) asserts that prior to the Renaissance and Reformation, childhood was not recognized as a unique developmental stage. Records of births and ages were not kept, children went unnamed until after they were past the vulnerable stage of infancy, and they were dressed in the same fashion as adults. Children took part in, and were party to, all aspects of life around them. With the advent of the cultural changes brought by the

Reformation and Renaissance, however, the idea of childhood as a preparatory stage for adulthood emerged. While Aries's theories have been disputed by some scholars (Pollock, 1983), his views of the evolution of childhood have become widespread.

As the notion of childhood as a preparatory state took hold, children came to be thought of as innocent, weak and in need of protection (Farson, 1974). The idea of the innocence of childhood was a new concept and, increasingly, children were separated more and more from the adult activities that might compromise that innocence. By the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, economic and social changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution led to a rise of the nuclear family unit in Western culture. This self-contained unit, made up of a married couple and their offspring, became the norm and the extended multi-generational family or community grouping was no longer as prevalent. Care of children came to be the sole responsibility of the parents, rather than the concern of the community at large. By the 1950's, there were clear cut boundaries for children and adults both in work and play as well as in the home. Western society had become very child-centred, with great amounts of time and money being spent on educating the young and preparing them for adulthood (Elkind, 1994).

The latter half of the twentieth century has been a period of great social change and the concept of childhood is once again undergoing a revision. Post-modern culture is seeing the lines between the child and the adult blurred and the boundaries crossed. The fundamental attributes of separateness and innocence are giving way, due largely to the glut of information available in the media. This is leading to pressure for children, particularly teens, to behave in an increasingly adult manner (Elkind, 1994).

Factors influencing change. Hart (1991) explains these gradual historical changes in the concept of childhood and the status of the child as being influenced by four factors. The first was childbearing and rearing practices. In earlier times, infant and maternal mortality were very high. As conditions improved, parents were better able to invest energy in the care of children and families became more child-centered.

Hart cites changes in economics and education as the second factor influencing the concept of childhood. Children were once valued for their economic contribution. Child labour in Western countries was the norm, particularly in agrarian and early industrial societies. The child-saving era of the early 20th century sentimentalized the value of children and promoted the need to prepare them for the future through education. This emphasis on education had the effect of prolonging the state of childhood.

The influence of the state is the third factor affecting changes in children's status. Parental control was absolute prior to the 16th century and common law paid little attention to children. Under the law they were treated as adults and subject to the same punishments (Howe, 1995). As children came to be viewed as vulnerable, the state reserved the right to intervene in family life to defend children when exploited or abused. The justice system developed in a paternalistic fashion and juvenile courts came into being, although children were not accorded due process. Parents still retain authority in many important areas and parental rights often take priority over the child's interests.

Finally, Hart cites the development of the sciences as influencing change in the status of children. Advances in medicine have vastly improved the chances of children living to adulthood, at least in Western cultures. Work done in the field of psychology has furthered the understanding of children and childhood. Social workers have made

advances in promoting welfare for children. Educators have, in recent years, taken on a child-rearing function in support of the family.

The Evolution of Children's Rights in North American Culture

While all these elements helped to bring about a change in the status of children in society, it was not until the human rights movement of this century that rights for children became an issue. Historically, children were seen to be little more than chattels and the property of the family, in particular the father. Children were considered assets and expected to contribute to family work in the then largely rural culture. The raising of children was left in the hands of the family and the State did not intervene except in the most extreme situations. In general, there was a lack of protective legislation and child-centred laws to ensure that children were not victimized by parents or employers (Howe, 1995).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a shift in the concept of childhood in North America prompted changes in the area of public policy regarding children's rights. Children came to be seen as a vulnerable group of potential citizens, requiring the need for more protection by the State than had previously been accorded them. Legislative changes allowed the State to intervene and remove children from abusive or neglectful homes. This child-saving philosophy led to the formation of Children's Aid Societies and public, compulsory education systems. These changes did not confer rights on children, however, and they continued to be perceived as dependent and incomplete (Howe, 1995).

The human rights movement of the mid-twentieth century asserted that as humans we all share inherent and intrinsic rights that must logically be due to children. Worsfold

(1974) sought to provide a philosophical basis for the logical inclusion of children in the human rights discussion. Worsfold outlined three criteria he believed were necessary for justifying children's rights. They are practicability, universality and paramount importance. By practicable, Worsfold meant that children's rights must be "theoretically possible or acceptable within some larger conception of the good society" (Worsfold 1974, p. 149). He acknowledged that while acceptance from society may be difficult to obtain, it is not wrong to claim fair treatment as a right. Universality, the second criterion, implies that rights should be appropriate for all children everywhere. However, the author added that the issue of capacity must be taken into account. Capacity, in this context, does not have precisely the same meaning as it does in developmental theory. In this instance, the author meant that children, regardless of age, must have the same capacity for rights as does any other member of society, even if exercising of those rights may differ for children of different ages. Therefore, children must enjoy the same presumptions for treatment under the law as all other members of society. The third criterion of paramount importance suggests that fair treatment for children must override all other considerations regarding our society's conduct toward children. By this the author meant that children's rights must take precedence over all other considerations, even the child's pleasure or what might be perceived to be in his/her best interests in either the short or long term.

Increased interest in children's rights in the 1970's grew out of human rights and civil rights struggles, particularly in the United States. Child-liberationists, like Farson (1974) and Holt (1974), wanted children to have the same rights as adults. Adherents of this point of view would allow children to leave school at any age, seek employment, enter

into contractual agreements, engage in sexual activity at any age and with any one, and refuse medical treatment. Children were characterized as "prisoners of childhood", at the mercy of hypocritical adults who claim that the oppression is for the child's good (Farson, 1974).

On the other side of the debate were those who held to the caretaker perspective, popular since the turn of the century. This philosophy of protecting children from harm and exploitation, while at the same time ensuring their development into responsible citizens, had motivated reformers throughout the early 1900's. The caretaker perspective assumes that the child is not competent to make choices that may affect his or her future, so decisions must be made by adults to protect both the child and the future adult.

In a paper that attempted to bring a more reasoned approach to the debate, Diana Baumrind (1978), a leading researcher in the field of parenting, took exception with the child-liberators. She maintained that granting children the full range of adult rights places added responsibility on the shoulders of adults to see that the children have the opportunity to exercise those rights. As Baumrind suggested, if children are to be permitted to enter into binding contracts, for example, then adults have a duty to give them the chance to make those commitments. This would upset the balance in the parent-child relationship that Baumrind believes is fundamental to the optimal development of the child. Taking a more balanced position, she wrote that parents must protect and guide their children, granting them opportunities to make their own choices when their abilities allow. In return, children must obey parents and submit to authority and learn the distinction between legitimate and unlawful authority. Bamrind endorsed the children's nurturance rights, which are those rights that provide objects, environments and

experiences deemed to be beneficial to children by society or a subset of society, not by children themselves. Baumrind did not endorse autonomy rights, or the rights of children to have control over various aspects of their lives and over their environments, before their abilities enable them to handle the responsibilities that come with the rights.

Research into children's rights. The diversity of opinion among professionals in the mental health and education fields led to research into children's rights and adult attitudes. Among this research is work by Rogers and Wrightman (1978), who surveyed adults about their attitudes toward children's rights across five content domains (health, education, economic concerns, safety and care and legal/judicial/political). They asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they felt children, between the ages of 10 and 14 years, should have both nurturance and autonomy rights. The adults they surveyed favoured a nurturance approach over a autonomous one, although younger respondents were willing to endorse autonomy rights more than older respondents.

In another examination of adult attitudes toward children's rights to self-determination, Bohrnstedt, Freeman and Smith (1981) also found a lack of consensus among respondents on this issue. The authors surveyed over 1000 adults on their opinions about children's rights across nine content domains. These domains were sexual conduct, access to media, religion, privacy, education, appearance, economic participation, public responsibility and social participation. Using a series of hypothetical vignettes that placed a child's wishes in conflict with his or her parents, the authors asked participants to decide in favour of the child or the parent. In those areas in which there are clearly defined social norms, (e.g., making a child go to a doctor even if he/she doesn't not want to), responses favoured parental control. However, for those areas where social

norms were less clear, (e.g., a child deciding to play basketball after school rather than studying music), respondents endorsed the child's right to choose. The authors acknowledge that promotion of children's autonomy rights will likely meet with considerable opposition from adults.

Much of the previous research into adult attitudes toward children's rights overlooked an important area that Gary Melton sought to address. Melton (1980) maintained that the opinions of children themselves must be added to the debate about children's rights. He set out to gain insight into children's concerns and determine the extent to which children are capable of understanding their rights, in order for them to participate in a defense of those rights. Melton hypothesized that the child's level of moral development and his or her social class will affect perception of rights. He noted that moral development in children involves the understanding and acceptance of social rules and felt that rules and rights share similar obligatory aspects. Young children hold rules to be sacred and untouchable, with the authority coming from parents. As a child grows older, he or she develops the concept of moral reciprocity and a sensitivity to the roles, needs and rights of others. Melton felt the older child is more likely to assert rights for him or herself than the younger child. As for social class, it was hypothesized by Melton the children of lower SES status would be less likely to see themselves as having autonomy rights, than their higher status counterparts.

In order to test these hypotheses, Melton interviewed grade school children by presenting hypothetical vignettes that involved children in conflict with authority. The results indicated that socio-economic status played a part in the respondents perception of their rights, with the result that children of lower SES were less inclined to see themselves

as having autonomy rights than higher status children. As well, there was a positive relation between the moral reasoning of the child and his or her perception of rights.

Melton (1982) argued that there are compelling reasons for the participation of children in the debate surrounding their rights. He maintained, contrary to the position held by Baumrind, that children's interests are not necessarily the same as their parents. He believed that there is no threat of harm to children by seeking their opinions but acknowledges that they may not see themselves as actually having rights. More recent work by Helwig (1995) indicates that adolescents do have concepts of universal rights and Ruck, Abramovitch & Keating (1998) and Ruck, Keating, Abramovitch & Koegl (1998) have examined children's understanding about their rights from a developmental perspective.

The surveying of children has taken precedence over understanding what adults believe are the rights of children. The primary purpose of the current research is to return to the earlier exploration of adult attitudes. The reasons for this are simple. Regardless of the opinions of children themselves, it is adults who will ultimately determine how children's rights will be defined, codified into law, and defended. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) has provided a foundation for children's rights around the world. This document has been agreed upon and ratified by many member countries, including Canada. However, the perusal of any daily newspaper will show that child poverty in this country is high at approximately 20%, that children continue to be abused by parents, and that child prostitution persists in our cities. What then are the attitudes of adults about children's rights? Is it possible to predict what these attitudes are, based on characteristics of adults and their relationships with children?

Values are one potentially important characteristic. The values we hold, related to children, underlie our society's treatment of them. As values and attitudes are associated (Olson & Zanna, 1993), we must first examine these values in order to understand attitudes. Another potential characteristic to consider is parental authority. Baumrind (1978) raises the issue of parental authority in relation to children's rights. This too should be considered in an exploration of adult attitudes. As well, previous research by Borhnstedt, Freeman and Smith (1981) considered parental status as a variable in determining adult attitudes. Therefore, these three variables could form the framework for current research on adult attitudes and children's rights. These variables will be discussed in detail below.

Attitudes and Values About Children's Rights

It is likely that attitudes about children's rights could be interpreted as a set or constellation of beliefs surrounding children in our society. The present study is an attempt to more fully understand the nature of adult attitudes toward the rights of children. The study of attitudes is a complex one, as attitudes are not easily thought of as single entities. Attitudes are believed to have affective, cognitive and behavioural components (Zanna & Rempel, 1988). Although all three domains may not necessarily apply to a given attitude, these domains can form a setting within which to approach the surveying of attitudes. Most researchers in this field also agree that attitudes have an evaluative component (Eagly & Chaiken, 1992). This evaluation, once formed, can impose itself on the object of the attitude in subsequent encounters. If this is indeed the case, then an evaluative appraisal of the place of children in our society could well be relevant to a survey of attitudes towards children's rights. Assessment of paternalist or

postmodern orientation may be a particularly important area of investigation. In the present research I consider the affective, cognitive and evaluative components of attitudes.

The relationship between attitudes and values is also explored in the present study. Values represent higher-order evaluative standards. Because of this, values can be thought of as potential determinants of attitudes (Olson & Zanna, 1993). As well, values may influence behaviour by affecting individuals' evaluations of the consequences of a particular action (Feather, 1990). If this is indeed the case, then the values adults hold with regard to the raising of children may in some way influence their attitudes toward children's rights. To examine that possible relationship, values held about the raising of children in general are considered. Although the values considered here will not be used to predict attitudes about rights, it is anticipated that values related to protective rights will be deemed of greater importance than values related to autonomy rights. This will help confirm that the paternalist philosophy that has characterized society for centuries is still a strong force.

Views About Children's Rights Embedded Within Views of Parent-Child Relationships

The fundamental relationship between adult and child is, of course, that of parent. It is necessary to turn to the parenting literature for understanding the nature of this relationship and look for ways in which to better understand adult attitudes towards children's rights. At present, in the published literature, it appears connections between attitudes toward children's rights and parenting style have not been investigated. However, the literature on parental authority and parent-child conflict provides a good basis for children's rights investigation.

Parent-child issues have been looked at extensively by Smetana (1991, 1994, 1995). A great deal of her work has centered around parental authority and parenting style, as well as parent-adolescent conflicts. She has identified five basic content areas in which parents and teens are often in conflict. These content areas are moral, conventional, personal, prudential and mixed. Moral issues are those that affect the rights and welfare of others, such as stealing. Conventional issues are described as arbitrary and consensually agreed-upon behaviours that structure social interaction. A mundane example of this would be table manners. Personal issues are of interest only to the actor and have no consequences for others, such as hair style or manner of dress. Prudential issues relate to personal safety and health (e.g., smoking or using drugs). The mixed category contains both conventional and personal elements. For example, keeping one's room clean may be a matter of personal choice, but a messy room may violate the household standards for cleanliness and could therefore cause conflict (Smetana, 1995).

Smetana uses a typology of parenting style based on Baumrind's (1971) classification system. According to this model, parenting varies along two dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness. When considered together these dimensions yield four styles of parenting: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and rejecting-neglecting. Both authoritarian and authoritative are high on the demanding dimension but the latter is also high on responsiveness. Therefore, the authoritative parent would exert firm control, while providing support and encouragement of autonomy in an age appropriate fashion. The authoritarian parent's firm control would not be tempered by responsiveness to the child's needs. Permissive parents are conceptualized as responsive yet undemanding and likely not to insist on adherence to parentally defined standards. The final group of

rejecting-neglecting parents are categorized as neither demanding nor responsive and, although coercive, would not frequently monitor children's behaviour (Smetana, 1994).

When parenting style was considered in relation to parent-child conflict, it was found that authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parents felt that they had the authority to make rules about moral, conventional and prudential issues equally. Parents and children rated the legitimacy of parental authority in these domains. It was noted that the area most likely to create conflict was the personal domain. However, when asked if they were obliged to make rules to govern conduct in these domains, the authoritarian parents were most likely to indicate their obligation, while permissive parents were least likely to indicate their obligation to make rules (Smetana, 1994). Authoritative parents were less inclined to use their authority than authoritarian parents, but they still felt a strong obligation. The parenting measure used in this research did not include items that identified the rejecting-neglecting parental style, as this style is not very common.

These issues of parent-child conflict speak directly to the question of children's rights. It is apparent from Smetana's work that the authority domains can be aligned with areas of children's rights as outlined in the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. The rights in the Convention are classified as survival, protection, developmental and autonomy rights (Limber, S. & Flekkøy, M. G., 1995). Survival and protection rights deal with the basic right to life, proper nutrition and health care. Developmental rights pertain to education, play and family environment. Autonomy rights are those that deal with expression, privacy, access to information and thought and conscience. Aligning these rights with the Smetana conflict domains, we can see that moral and conventional conflict domains can be thought of as developmental rights under the Convention.

Prudential issues are clearly those that deal with survival and protection rights. Finally, the personal and mixed conflict domains align with autonomy rights. The rights in the Convention can also be viewed in terms of the nurturance/autonomy perspectives discussed earlier. Nurturance pertains to survival, protection and development rights, while autonomy pertains to autonomy rights.

A paternalist or caretaker attitude towards children's rights has prevailed for centuries and it is still apparent in our approach to dealing with children in our culture. Paternalism is reflected in the parenting theories of Baumrind. Even Melton (1982), who advocates the rights of children and their involvement in the defining of those rights, adopts a paternalistic tone when he writes of how he would deal with the very young. The nurturance orientation of children's rights, as conceptualized by Rogers and Wrightman (1978), captures this sentiment. From this perspective, it is society that decides what is best for children.

The more difficult issue to come to terms with is a child's right to autonomy outlined by the U. N. Convention. Rogers and Wrightman (1978) define this orientation as the child's right to make decisions for himself or herself about their lives and futures. Expressed in its most sensational form by child-liberationists, children should have the right to do anything adults do. A child of any age would have all the rights that society now reserves for adults. However, having rights under the law does not mean that children will choose to exercise them. A child, like an adult, may have the right to live where he/she chooses, yet a child who is happy with his/her home environment may not want to live elsewhere.

Within the last 30 years, as Elkind points out, the pendulum is swinging again toward encouraging children to behave more like adults. When he considers North American postmodern culture at the end on the twentieth century, he finds a movement toward individual autonomy. In terms of parents and children, he believes this means a change in the emphasis on autonomy. Parents, Elkind believes, have always fostered autonomy but this has taken on greater importance in recent times and while paternalism is not gone, it is less a guiding philosophy than it once was (Elkind,1994).

It is of interest, then, to try to understand how adults perceive this issue of autonomy with regard to the rights of children. It is also of interest to see if the preferred style of parenting is related to the attitudes towards children's rights. Nurturance rights, or those rights to safety and protection from harm, are likely to be strongly endorsed by all adults, regardless of the preferred style of parenting used. Autonomy rights, (i.e., those rights to freedom of choice), may show different patterns of endorsement relative to different preferred styles of parenting.

I hypothesize participants' endorsement of permissive parenting style (i.e., somewhat lower in control) will be positively correlated with the favourable endorsement of a child's right to behave in an autonomous fashion, regardless of the age of the child. Conversely, authoritarian and authoritative parenting will be negatively correlated with endorsement of autonomy rights, particularly when the child is younger.

Parent Status

A search of the published literature revealed little evidence for comparisons between parents and non-parents on their views of children's rights. However, work by Bohrnstedt, Freeman, and Smith (1981) included an analysis of the differences in response

between married and single participants. This study involved the survey of 1002 adults in Southern California. Of that number, 198 had never been married, the remainder were either married at the time of the study or had been previously married. The issues examined included access to media, freedom of religion, privacy and appearance. The children in the vignettes ranged in age from 10 - 16 years. The authors found significant differences between the married and single respondents. Overall, they found that the non-married sample was more likely to side with the child in the story than were the married respondents, regardless of the child's age. The authors explained this by suggesting that the single participants had not had the experience of living with children and having to deal with the costs of giving children the freedom to act autonomously. They further suggest that an age difference between the married and single participants may also account for the differences in response. The authors were clearly making the assumption that the majority of the single participants were not parents and that the majority of married ones were parents.

Although this assumption should be approached cautiously these data do provide a basis to proceed in examining parent/non-parent differences in regard to endorsement of children's autonomy rights. I hypothesize that a similar pattern will emerge in the present study; parents will be less inclined to support a child's right to act in an autonomous fashion than non-parents.

Child Developmental Status

Bohrnstedt, Freeman, and Smith (1980) noted that the adult participants in their study were more inclined to support a child's right to exercise autonomy if the child were older (i.e., in his or her early-to-mid teens) than if the child was 10 or 12 years old. Also

Morton and Dubanoski (1980), in their study of adult attitudes toward children's rights, found that endorsement of children's autonomy rights increased as the child grew older. Further, Melton (1980) and Ruck et al (1998) both found that older children are more inclined to claim a right for themselves than are younger ones.

It is apparent that there is a trend to support or endorse autonomy rights for a child if the child is older. This suggests that adults, when considering these issues, may have a sense of a child's "developmental readiness" for autonomy. To further explore this possibility, in the present study I considered participants' beliefs with regard to the ages children reach certain cognitive and social developmental milestones. I hypothesize that the age at which participants feel a child has reached these milestones will correlate with the age at which they believe children can exercise certain autonomy rights.

The current study also follows in the path of previous research (Borhstedt, Freeman & Smith, 1981; Ruck et al. 1998) by presenting vignettes involving a child in conflict with his/her parents over the child's desire to exercise an autonomy right. Respondents are asked if they can support the child in question if the child is 10 years old, or to indicate the age they feel is more appropriate. It was expected that, as with the previous findings, participants will be more likely to support the child's right to act autonomously if the child is older than 10 years than for a younger child.

Emotional Response to Children's Rights Issues

The parental experience is an emotional one, involving a wide range of different feelings such as joy, anger, fear and pride. Research indicates that positive or negative emotions can promote corresponding positive or negative parenting experiences (Dix,

1991). Dix proposes a three-part model that begins with the activation and appraisal of the emotion, moves to engagement that results in some sort of change in cognition or motivation, and then progresses to regulation or evaluation of the emotion. The current published literature does not indicate that this model has been applied to the issues of children's rights and parental emotions concerning those rights.

The emotions involved in the parenting experience are expected to be elicited when participants are asked to decide how they would feel if the child featured in the vignettes was their child. It is expected that parents will demonstrate a higher level of emotional intensity across all emotions than non-parents. This is likely to be based on the greater familiarity that parents have had with the emotional nature of the parenting experience. While non-parents are expected to show the same range of emotions, it is the intensity of the emotion that is expected to vary.

Design of the Present Study

In order to study adults' attitudes and emotions toward children's rights, a series of hypothetical vignettes was designed. This technique has been used in children's rights studies by Rogers and Wrightman (1978), Melton (1980), Bohrnstedt, et al (1981), Ruck et al. (1998), as well as Smetana (1994). In the present study, the vignettes were designed to place a child's wish to act in autonomous fashion in conflict with the wishes of his or her parents and establish a parent-child conflict over a specific autonomy right. These vignettes were presented in the interview portion of the study and participants were asked the extent to which they would endorse the child's right to act of his or her own accord. Adults were also asked to indicate the extent to which they felt each of several emotions as a result of these conflicts.

Additional information on parenting beliefs, values about raising children and adult's understanding of child development was also gathered. These data, along with demographic information about the participants, was collected in written form. Both parents and non-parents were surveyed and differences in their responses, if any, were determined.

Summary of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the present study. First, it was expected that the participants would consider values that pertain to protection and development to be of greater importance than values pertaining to autonomy. The protection and developmental values are aligned with the nurturance or caregiving philosophy that defines our society's approach to dealing with children. It is expected that these values will take precedence over autonomy values.

Second, I hypothesized that parenting style would be related to the endorsement or positive support of children's autonomy rights. Specifically, endorsement of the autonomy rights in question will be positively correlated with a preference for permissive style, across all conflict domains. Further, there would be a negative correlation between endorsement of autonomy rights and both authoritarian and authoritative styles.

Third, it was predicted that parents and non-parents would differ in their positive endorsement of the autonomy rights in question. Specifically, it was expected that parents would be less willing to support the autonomy right for a 10 year-old than would non-parents.

Fourth, it was expected that, overall, participants would be more likely to support autonomy rights for older children than for younger ones. Therefore, it was predicted

that, regardless of parent status, the majority of respondents would more strongly endorse the autonomy rights in question for a child older than 10 years, thereby confirming the developmental trend previously reported in the literature. Further it was expected that there would be a positive relationship between the ages at which participants felt a child reached certain cognitive and social milestones and the age at which they would endorse a child's right to act in an autonomous fashion.

Finally, it was expected that the emotions surrounding the conflicts involving children's autonomy rights would be reported to be of greater intensity for parents than for non-parents. While both groups would acknowledge the emotional nature of the conflict, parents would report more intense fear, anger, joy, sadness and surprise.

Method

Participants

For the purposes of this research, both parents and non-parents were required. It was felt that the non-parent sample would be most readily obtained from the undergraduate population of the University, although the study was open to those students who were also parents. University participants were recruited from the first year Psychology subject pool, in accordance with the regulations that govern access to that pool of potential participants. A sign-up sheet that described the research, time commitment and credit value was posted and those interested left their names and phone numbers. The students who took part were given research credit worth one hour to apply toward the total required for the course. Since it was anticipated that additional parents would be required, parent participants were also recruited from community daycare centres.

Recruitment of parent participants from daycare centres involved obtaining permission from the prospective daycare directors to solicit among their clients. In total, 13 centres agreed to take part in this research. Four of the centres were in St. Catharines, eight were in Oakville and one was in Mississauga. Only one daycare centre declined to participate when approached. To obtain this permission, the researcher made a personal presentation at each of the centres and provided detailed information about the nature of the study and the method of recruitment proposed. It was decided prior to approaching the centres that it would be best to interfere as little as possible in the efficient running of the daycare. Therefore, in presenting to the centres' Directors, it was suggested that a

poster be displayed inviting interested parents to take part in the research. Face-to-face recruitment of potential participants would be avoided.

Characteristics of the Sample

In total, 90 participants took part in this research. Twenty-nine of those were recruited from the community daycare centres and the remaining 61 came from the University. While most of the parents came from the day care sample, six Brock students had children and were therefore counted as parent participants. Conversely, two of the day care respondents were not parents and were counted among the non-parent sample. These individuals were daycare workers. The average age of the participants was 25 years and ages ranged from 18-50 (SD = 8.03).

In total, 75 (83%) of the participants were women and 15 (17%) of participants were men. All of the male participants came from the University sample. The lack of male participants from the daycare group may be attributed to the fact that it is predominantly women who drop off and pick up children from daycare centres.

The majority of participants, 69%, were single and 28% were married. A total of 33 (37%) participants were parents, while the remaining 57 (63%) were not. Of those participants who are parents, 61% had two or more children. The majority of participants,(69%) reported that high school was the highest level of education completed. Twenty-four percent had completed college or university. Only 3 participants (3%) had not finished high school. Sixty percent identified themselves as White, while 21% identified themselves as Canadian. One participant was Afro-Canadian. Ninety-four percent indicated English as the language spoken at home. Of those participants reporting an annual household income figure, 54 % were below $50,000 per annum. The majority

(69%) reported their occupation as student, while the remaining participants held administrative, medical and child-care positions.

Relationships among demographic variables Correlations were run to determine whether or not the demographic variables were related. There was a positive correlation between the participant's age and level of education ($r = .58$, $p. < .01$). As well, participant age was negatively correlated to parent status ($r = -.82$, $p. < .01$), meaning that younger participants were less likely to be parents. Finally, education and parent status were also negatively correlated ($r = -.57$, $p. < .01$).

Procedure

This study was conducted in two parts, consisting of a questionnaire portion that was completed first by all participants and an interview that was completed by a subset of self-selected participants.

Questionnaires. Participants recruited from both the University and respective day care centres were administered the questionnaires in the same fashion. In order that conditions for both groups be as similar as possible, all participants were allowed to take a questionnaire package home for completion. In each case the questionnaire was placed in a numbered envelope with a consent form indicating willingness to take part in the research and giving respondents an opportunity to participate in the interview portion of the study. A brief set of instructions was also included in the package. A copy of the letter and consent form can be found in the Appendix. The package also included a demographic questionnaire, two measures of parenting style (one for the respondent and one that asked about the respondents' parents [1]), a child development measure and a values measure.

University participants were called and a time was arranged for them to pick up their package from one of the researchers.[2] They were asked to complete the questionnaires within a week and return it, sealed, to the researcher's mailbox or the Department of Psychology's essay box. The student participants were told that on completion and receipt of their questionnaire, the research credit would be submitted to the appropriate Psychology 1F90 teaching assistant. In total, 68 questionnaire packages were distributed and 62 were completed and returned. This represented a return rate of 91%.

Day care centres were provided with a box containing envelopes prepared as above, a sign-out sheet, and a pencil. Centre Directors were asked to leave the boxes in a prominent place near the door or the children's belongings, along with a poster asking for volunteers. Those taking a package were asked to sign out the numbered package, leave their phone number and write in a date of return for the completed envelope. They were asked on the instruction sheet to try to complete the package and return it sealed within a week's time. Upon completion and receipt of their questionnaire, they would receive a scratch and win lottery ticket as a thank you for their participation. Collection of completed questionnaires took place every week to 10 days. In total, 85 questionnaires were distributed to the participating day cares, 29 of which were completed and returned. The rate of return was 34%.

Interviews. It was determined after the pilot study that to bring people into the University for a face-to-face interview would pose considerable inconvenience, especially for the day care participants, given that the majority were working during the day.[3] It was

felt that this would make recruitment even more difficult than was already anticipated. Therefore, the decision was made to interview all participants by phone.

Participants indicated their willingness to take part in an interview on the consent form. Interested respondents were called and a time that was mutually convenient for both interviewer and interviewee was arranged for a later date. Twenty-one or 37% of non-parents and 19 or 58% of parents indicated their interest in an interview. Participants were told at the time of booking the appointment that approximately 1 hour would be required to complete the interview. Most student participants were interviewed during the day while all the day care participants were interviewed in the evening. When calling later at the prearranged time to undertake the interview, it was first determined whether the participant could proceed at that time. If it was not possible, a second time was arranged. Otherwise the interview proceeded as planned.

Of the 40 participants consenting to be interviewed, a total of 22 interviews were completed. Twelve parents or 63% of those interested in interviewing were eventually contacted. Ten or 48% of non-parents were interviewed. The high attrition rate was due to three factors. First, not all those who had indicated their interest in an interview were willing to take part when eventually contacted. Although an effort was made to contact participants shortly after their questionnaires were returned, it was not always possible to contact people quickly. This may have accounted for some "change of heart". As well, the student participants were told that their participation in the interview would not provide them with additional course credit, although an incentive of a lottery ticket was offered instead. A number of these participants then withdrew their agreement to take part in the interview. Second, some participants proved unreachable even after several

attempts to make contact. Third, some of those who had agreed to a date and time were not available when the researcher called and a second interview time was not established.

Participants were advised that they would be read a series of vignettes that place a child's wishes to make decisions for himself or herself in conflict with the wishes of his or her parents, and that they would be asked to decide if they felt the child had the right to act of his or her own accord and why they may feel this way. They were told that their responses would be recorded by the interviewer.[4] They were advised that in each case the child in the story was 10 years old. They were told that they would also be asked to determine a more suitable age if they felt that 10 years was not the best choice. They were then advised that they would be asked to indicate how they might feel if the child in the story was their child. The vignettes and questions were then read by the interviewer.

After each interview was completed, the participant was debriefed and explanations were given for the rationale behind the study.[5] Any questions that the participant had about the study were answered and the interviewee was thanked for his or her time. Interviewees were told that a summary of the results of the research would be available should they wish to be sent a copy.

Questionnaire Measures

Demographics. Participants were asked to provide demographic information in the questionnaires. Participants were asked to indicate their sex, age, marital status, ages and genders of children, level of education, occupation and their annual household income. They were also asked to indicate their ethnic affiliation and the language spoken in the home. A copy of the demographics questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

Parenting style. Parenting style was assessed using the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Buri (1989, 1991) and can be found in the Appendix. The PAQ yields three scores based on the patterns of parenting described by Baumrind (1971). Participants receive scores on authoritarian, authoritative and permissive subscales. These patterns, as measured by the PAQ, differ in the amount of exercised parental control, with authoritarian and authoritative dimensions being higher in control than the permissive prototype. Typically, while participants exhibit characteristics of each of the three, one will predominate (Smetana, 1995). Each prototype is measured by ten statements. Items 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24 and 28 comprise the Permissive subscale, (e.g., "I feel that in a well run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do"), items 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26 and 29, the Authoritarian subscale, (e.g., "Even if my children disagree with me, I feel that it is for their own good if I force them to conform to what I think is right") and items 4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27 and 30 the Authoritative subscale, (e.g., "Once family policy has been established, I discuss the reasoning behind the policy with my children").

Reliability data provided by Buri (1991) shows test-retest results at two weeks of .81 for mother's and .77 for father's permissiveness, .86 for mother's and .85 for father's authoritarianism and .78 for mother's and .92 for father's authoritarianism. It was further determined that the scale does not correlate with social desirability.

Beliefs about developmental norms for children's cognitive and social skills. A measure of adults' understanding of cognitive and social development in children was needed. A search of the literature failed to locate such a measure. Therefore I compiled a list of cognitive and social milestones relevant to autonomy issues (found in the

Appendix). The list was generated in consultation with my thesis supervisor as well as other students of developmental psychology working in the same lab. The resulting Children's Development Questionnaire has 23 items consisting of 11 cognitive and 12 social developmental milestones. No pre-testing was conducted on this scale. Participants were asked to indicate the age in years that they believed the average child would reach each milestone. The cognitive portion of the scale included items such as understanding long term consequences, differentiating fact from fantasy and understanding another person's point of view. The social part of the scale included items such as when a child could date, baby-sit and pick his/her own friends. The coefficient alpha for the scale was .89.

Values about children's rights. There were two value measures included in the questionnaire portion of the present study. A search of the literature failed to reveal any value measure related to children's issues, therefore value measures were designed by me to assess values specifically related to children. The value measures are included in the Appendix.

The first value measure, The Scale of Values for Raising Children, asked participants to indicate the relative importance placed on values pertaining to the treatment and raising of children. The values chosen reflected the Convention distinction between survival, developmental and autonomy rights. The survival values were freedom from abuse and access to health care. Developmental values were access to education, play and access to family. Autonomy values were freedom of association, expression, access to information, privacy and freedom of thought and conscience. Participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale how important they felt each of the 10 values to

be in the raising of children. The scale ranged from 1 for "not at all important" to 5 for "extremely important".

Participants were also asked to rank the 10 values from most important to least important. This part of the questionnaire was included to help determine which of the three categories of rights participants believed to be the most important for raising children.

The second measure pertained specifically to the five rights (four of which are autonomy and one protection) that were included in the interview portion of the study. Participants were asked to indicate whether or not they felt a child had the right to information, association, access to the media, expression and freedom from abuse with "Yes" or "No" responses. This brief measure was included to offer some indication of how participants felt about values when framed as questions about children's rights in an abstract context.

Interview Measures

For the interview portion of the present study, a series of 31 hypothetical vignettes was generated and pilot tested. The pilot testing yielded a total of 13 vignettes that were subsequently used in the interview portion of the present study. The vignettes dealt with the autonomy rights to information, freedom of expression, access to the media, freedom of association and the protection right to freedom from abuse. Three vignettes for each right were included with the exception of the right to freedom from abuse, in which only one vignette was used. The decision to use three vignettes per right was made in order to provide multiple contexts for the same right. The reason for using only one abuse vignette was due to the disturbing nature of the issue. It was found during the pilot phase that

people were uncomfortable with the subject, particularly when required to imagine themselves as parents using abusive tactics.

The reduced number of vignettes allowed each interviewee to be presented with all 13 situations within a reasonable interview time period. The child in question in each case was 10 years old and the vignettes were written with both boys and girls as the protagonists. Therefore, in total 26 vignettes were used. A complete list of rights vignettes can be found in Appendix C. Presentation of the vignettes was randomized so that the order of presentation and the gender of the child varied from interview to interview. There was no attempt made, for parent participants, to match the gender of the child in the vignette with the gender of the participant's oldest child.

Endorsement of rights. The first part of Question 1, "Does *name of child in the story* have the right to *do what they want to in the story*?" required a Yes/No response only. Part two of that question "Why *do you think the child in the story has this right*?" asked for an explanation of their choice for part one. Responses were recorded and probing questions were asked if clarification was required.

Coding for part two of the first question was established during the pilot test and later refined in the actual study. In total, five responses were identified: (a) age; either too young or old/mature enough (e.g. "not old enough - don't have enough experience" and "more adult- it's their own decision"); (b) consequences to the child, either harmful/negative or beneficial (e.g., would not allow "for safety reasons" and would allow because "they are learning"); (c) personal to the child (e.g., "has a mind of their own" and "they should be able to choose their own friends"); (d) right (e.g., "the right to her own opinion" and "right not to be slapped"); and (e) incomplete/uncertain (e.g., "not sure").

Coding was completed by the researcher and an associate working independently. All 22 interviews were coded by each rater. Interrater reliability was high with percentage of agreement at .87 for the abuse vignette, .86 for the media access vignettes, .97 for the right to information vignettes, .92 for the right to expression vignettes and .85 for the association vignettes.

Appropriate age for rights. Question 2 required the interviewee to give an age in years that he or she felt was appropriate for the child in the story to act of his/her own accord. Interviewees were reminded that the child in question is ten and were asked "What is the appropriate age *for name of the child* to *do what they want to in the story*." They were then asked to provide a reason for their choice of age. Again, where necessary, probing questions were asked to clarify the responses.

It was found during the coding procedure that the categories established for the question "Why *do you think the child in the story has this right*?" worked equally well for the second question about age. The same five categories were used (age, consequences, personal, rights and incomplete/uncertain). It should be noted that summaries of these explanations are not provided in this paper. The numbers per category were too small to provide significant insight into autonomy rights and the decision was made to leave them out.

Emotional responses to rights. The interviewees were then read the list of emotion words one at a time and asked to indicate on a scale of 1 - 5 how strongly they might feel this emotion if the child in question was theirs. In this case a "1" meant they would not experience the emotion at all and "5" meant that it would be felt in the extreme. After each emotion word was rated, the participant was asked to indicate why he or she would

feel this way. Here again probing questions were used when necessary to clarify the response.

The emotion words were modified slightly as a result of the pilot study. The words selected were based on work by Shaver, Schwartz, Kirkson, and O'Connor (1989), which establishes emotion prototypes based on the formation of natural categories. This work defines five or six categories of emotions: love, joy, anger, sadness, fear and possibly surprise. Only five categories were used in this study, fear, anger, joy, sadness and surprise. The fear words used were "fear" and "anxiety", the anger words were "frustration" and "anger", the sadness words were "sadness", "disappointment" and "guilt" and the joy words were "happiness" and "pride". Surprise was the only word used in that category. Therefore, in total, ten emotion words were used in the final study.

Coding for the groups of emotion words was as follows. The Fear category generated two explanations: unknown or harmful consequences for the child and uncertainty as to how to handle the situation. The Anger category generated four explanations: violation of parental expectations, parent/child conflicts, society in general and doubt ability or unsure what to do. The Sadness words prompted four explanations: violation of parental expectations, negative consequences for the child, parental actions/inaction and loss of childhood innocence. The Joy category generated three explanations: develop/explore new things, shows they are their own person and chance for parent/child discussion. Surprise yielded four explanations: parents defied, behaviour was not learned at home, action was unexpected and wonder about why they did this.

Results

The results of the study will be presented in the following order. First, comparisons between parent and non-parent participants will be presented. Second, the relative importance of values pertaining to child-rearing is presented, followed by a summary of respondents' ranking of the values. The hypothesis that caretaking values will be ranked as more important than autonomy values will be tested and an additional exploration of possible parent/non-parent differences will be presented.

The question of the endorsement of children's rights will be examined next. Results from the questionnaire data will be presented first, followed by information obtained from the interviews. The ages at which participants were willing to endorse rights will be discussed and the hypothesis regarding the conferring of rights to older children rather than younger ones will be tested. The relationship between parenting style and status and the endorsement of rights will be explored and specific hypotheses tested.

An exploration of adult understanding of normative child development will be presented, followed by correlations between expected ages for children's cognitive and social development and appropriate ages for individual rights. Again, parenting style and status differences will be considered in relation to expected ages. Finally, a summary of emotions associated with a child's assertion of his or her rights will be presented. Parent

style comparisons will be presented and the parent status and emotions hypothesis will be tested.

Two changes in the planned analysis were made after an initial examination of the data. As noted in the previous section, there were only 15 men in the study and none of them were parents. Gender comparisons were made on all the variables and significant differences are noted. Further, the right of freedom from abuse was included in the study in the hope that participants would provide useful information about this right and the use of slapping as a form of discipline. It was found during the interview, that respondents were very uncomfortable with the slapping vignette and the majority were reluctant to answer. Responses, when they were forthcoming, are reported. However, the numbers are too small overall to make inferences about their significance. The results for this vignette are noted in the various tables and figures, but no attempt has been made to analyze results for discussion.

Assessment of Parental Status, Differences in Age, Education and Income.

One of the key questions examined in this study was the difference in responses between parents and non-parents. Therefore, potential differences in demographic variables between parents and non-parents were explored prior to hypothesis testing. As mentioned above, 33 of the participants were parents and the remaining 57 were not. Independent t-tests were performed to determine if there were significant differences between the groups on the demographic variables. As can be seen in Table 1, parent participants were significantly older, had more education and had higher incomes than the non-parent participants.

Table 1. Summary of Parent and Non-Parent Participant Comparisons

Variable	Parent Status	M	SD	t - value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Age	Parent	33.48	7.27	13.55	87	.01
	Non-parent	19.88	1.57			
Education	Parent	2.97	1.07	6.44	85	.01
	Non-parent	2.04	.19			
Income	Parent	6.19	2.70	2.97	76	.05
	Non-parent	4.26	2.89			

The difference in age between the two groups was controlled in subsequent analyses of parent/non-parent differences. Education and income were not controlled, as these variables were positively correlated with age (.58 for education and .36 for income, $p. < .01$).

Participants' Parenting Style

Parenting style was measured by the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1989). Each participant received a score on three parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative), where scores could range between 10 and 50. The results

can be found in Table 2. Independent t-tests performed on the sample means revealed no significant differences between the parent and non-parent groups.

Table 2 Parenting Style Scores for Parent and Non-Parent Participants

	Parent Sample		Non-Parent Sample		Total Sample	
Parenting Style	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Permissive	22.19	5.045	24.28	5.22	23.52	5.23
Authoritarian	25.38	6.19	26.14	5.98	25.86	6.03
Authoritative	43.22	3.41	41.56	4.52	42.17	4.20

Note. Total Sample N = 89 for Permissive and Authoritarian and 87 for Authoritative.
Parent Sample N = 32 for Permissive and Authoritarian and Authoritative.
Non-Parent N = 57 for Permissive and Authoritarian and 55 for Authoritative.

Comparisons were made between those who volunteered to take part in the interview portion of the study and those who did not. Independent t-tests revealed no significant differences between the groups. In addition, there was only one gender difference on these variables. Men scored lower on the authoritativeness scale than women, t (85) = 2.93, $p < .01$.

Summary of Values about Children's Rights

The values assessed in this study were based on the rights set out in the U. N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. Those rights are grouped into survival, protection, developmental and autonomy categories (see Table 4 for categorization). It was hypothesized that the survival, protection and developmental values would be rated and ranked as more important than the autonomy values.

In all, 10 values were presented to participants, who were asked to first indicate the importance of each value on its own and then to rank the values from most important to least important. The rating assessment of each right was done on a scale of 1 - 5 where 1 was "not at all important" and 5 was "extremely important". Overall, participants tended to rate each value quite high. The means and standard deviations for these ratings can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Importance Ratings of Values for Children's Rights

	Parent Sample		Non-Parent Sample		Total Sample	
Value	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Freedom from Abuse	4.84	.71	4.88	.57	4.87	.62
Association	3.97	.68	3.98	.77	3.96	.73
Education	4.76	.79	4.75	.43	4.76	.59
Expression	4.52	.80	4.46	.63	4.48	.69
Family	4.85	.71	4.93	.26	4.90	.48
Health	4.70	.77	4.95	.23	4.86	.51

Information	4.18	.85	4.30	.76	4.26	.79
Play	4.39	.83	4.44	.66	4.42	.72
Privacy	3.97	.68	4.35	.72	4.21	.73
Thought and Conscience	4.24	.83	4.54	.63	4.43	.72

Note. N = 90

Differences by type of right for value ratings. The value ratings were grouped according to the Convention designation of protection, developmental and autonomy rights and paired t-tests were performed. It was determined that the three groups differed significantly, with protection being more important than developmental, t (89) = 7.21, p < .01 and developmental being more important than autonomy, t (89) = 7.68, p < .01.

Parent Status differences and rating of values. Independent t-tests indicated only one significant difference between the participant groups, for the value privacy, t = -2.46, p < .05. Parents rated this value less important than non-parents.

Parenting style and rating of values. Correlations were performed to determine if there was a relation between preferred parenting style and rating of values. Only two small but significant correlations were evident. Authoritative parenting style correlated negatively with the value of access to information, r = -.22, p < .05 and permissive parenting style correlated positively with the value of thought and conscience, r = .22, p < 05.

Ranking of values. It was hypothesized that protection/survival values would be ranked as of greater importance than values pertaining to development and autonomy. Ranking of these values with respect to importance is presented in Table 4. A Freidman test indicated there was a significant overall difference among the ranks, χ^2 (9) = 494.92, p < 01. Grouping these values according to the divisions within the Convention, the hypothesis that survival/protection values are greatest in importance is supported. Post-hoc comparisons using the Freidman test for multiple comparisons for groups (Siegel & Castellan, Jr., 1988) showed that the survival/protection values were ranked significantly higher than the developmental values and that the developmental values were ranked as more important than the autonomy values, z = 3.25, p < .05 and z = 2.58, p < .05, respectively.

Table 4. Ranking of Values for Children's Rights

Mean Rank	Value	Convention Grouping
1.98	Freedom from Abuse	Protection/Survival
2.21	Family	Developmental
3.16	Health	Protection/Survival
4.71	Education	Developmental
5.72	Expression	Autonomy
6.27	Thought/Conscience	Autonomy
6.90	Play	Developmental
7.90	Association	Autonomy

8.07	Information	Autonomy
8.09	Privacy	Autonomy

Parent status and ranking of values. Post hoc comparisons were done to assess potential parent status differences in mean ranking of values using the Wilcoxon statistic. The only significant difference was that non-parents tended to value association more than parents, z (89) = -2.16, p = .05.

Gender differences and ranking of values. Two significant gender differences were found. Men ranked Association as more important than women, z (89) = -3.12, $p < .01$ and Education less important z (89) = -2.03, $p < .05$.

Responses to "Yes/No" Questions Concerning Children's Participatory Rights.

All participants were asked to indicate, with "Yes" or "No" responses, whether or not they believed children had four autonomy rights (information, association, access to the media, expression) and one survival right (freedom from abuse). These rights are aligned with four autonomy values and one protection value. Age of the child was not specified in this instance. As can be seen in Table 5 below, only the right to access the media showed any variation in response.

Interview and non-interview participants' responses are shown. Since the groups of five rights are later explored in detail in the report of the interview portion of the study, these responses are given to indicate that there was no difference in response between the self-selected groups.

Table 5. Percentage of Respondents Endorsing Children's Rights Questions

Right	Non-Interview Sample Yes	Interview Sample Yes	Total Sample Yes
Information	97	100	98
Association	100	95	98
Media	42	45	42
Expression	100	100	100
Abuse	100	100	100

Note. Total Sample N = 90, except for Association at N = 83.
Interview Sample N = 22, except for Association at N = 21.
Non-Interview Sample N = 68, except for Association at N = 62.

The relationship between "yes/no" responses and parenting style. It was hypothesized that permissive style would correlate positively with endorsement of all rights, while authoritarian and authoritative styles would be negatively correlated with endorsement of only autonomy rights. However, there was a skewed distribution of the Yes/No responses, and only the right of access to the media had enough variance to analyze. As predicted, a significant positive correlation was found with permissive parenting style, $r = .42$, $p < .01$. Correlations with authoritarian and authoritative styles were non-significant, $r = .08$, $p < .43$ and $r = -.06$, $p < .59$, respectively.

To determine if the positive correlation between permissive parenting style and endorsement of the right to access the media was not simply related to other factors, a

logistic regression analysis was conducted. Age and education were entered as covariates before permissive parenting style. The result was significant, with χ^2 (88) = 27.7, $p < .01$. Therefore, as predicted, permissive parenting was related to willingness to let children access the media, when age and education were controlled.

"Yes/No" responses and parent status. It was hypothesized that non-parents would be more likely to endorse children's autonomy rights than parents. An independent t-test conducted between parent status and the yes/no right to access the media responses found no significant relationship between the variables. A logistic regression was run using age and education as controls. Again, parent status did not make a significant contribution to the response on this rights question. Therefore, the hypothesized effect for parent status was not supported for this right. The other four rights showed no significant variation in response and were not tested.

Responses to rights presented in vignettes. The 13 vignettes presented in the interview portion of the study dealt with the same five rights in the questionnaire, although in this case the rights were embedded in everyday contexts involving parent/child conflict. As well, the age of the child was specified in this part of the study as 10 years old. The first question for each vignette was, "Does the child in the vignette have the right to……?". A "Yes/No" response was required. The results of these responses by vignette are presented in the Appendix B. The results by groups of rights are found in Table 6. Overall, it is apparent that participants were less inclined to support the groups of rights when presented in an everyday context and age was specified than they were when asked to support rights in an abstract context.

Table 6. Percentages of Respondents Agreeing by Parent Status in Interview Rights

	Parents	Non-Parents	Total
Right	% Yes	% Yes	% Yes
Association	49	69	58
Information	61	77	68
Expression	58	63	61
Media	36	66	49
Abuse	100	89	77

Note. Parent Sample N = 12 for all vignettes except abuse with N = 9.
Non-Parent Sample N = 10 except for club and music with N = 9.

The relationship between responses to rights in vignettes and parenting style. Preference for permissiveness was predicted to be positively correlated with autonomy rights while preference for authoritatrianess and authoritativeness would be negatively correlated with autonomy rights. Correlations between parenting styles and Yes/No responses to the vignettes were conducted and it was determined that there were no significant relationships between these variables. Therefore, parenting style was not

related to positive endorsement of a 10-year-olds rights in the context of the everyday situations.

Responses to vignette rights and parent status. It was hypothesized that parents would be less willing to support autonomy rights for a 10-year-old than non-parents. Chi-square analyses were done on the yes/no responses to rights in the vignettes. It was found that only access to the media was significantly different for the two groups, χ^2 (1) = 6.24, $p < .05$. This hypothesis was supported only for this autonomy right. Correlations between the age of the participant and response on this right were found to be unrelated. Therefore, the difference noted above can not be explained by age differences in the groups.

Children's Rights and Age of the Child

Participants were asked to indicate the age they felt was most appropriate for children to be able to act autonomously. The responses showed some interesting variation in distribution. Therefore, mean, median and mode are reported. The Internet vignette for right to access the media showed a bi-modal distribution with ages 10 years and 16 years receiving 22% of the responses. A summary of the ages for each vignette is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Summary of Appropriate Ages in Years for Exercising Rights

Right	Vignette	M	Mode	Median	SD
Association	Club	11.32	16	10.0	5.03

	Friend	9.00	5	7.0	5.20
	Internet	14.65	18	16.0	3.95
Information	Birth Control	9.00	10	10.0	5.58
	Magazine	14.71	16	16.0	3.52
	Adoption	8.70	10	10.0	4.45
Expression	School	4.64	2	3.0	4.33
	Pierce	13.27	10	14.50	3.73
	Tattoo	15.50	18	16.50	4.17
Media	Television	13.36	13	13.50	2.90
	Music	9.67	10	10.0	4.40
	Internet	11.27	10[a]	10.00	5.22
Abuse	Slapping	1.75	0	.00	3.28

[a]Responses to this right was bi-modal. The media/Internet vignette had 22.7% each of responses at ages 10 and 16 years.

It was hypothesized that participants would endorse children's autonomy rights for older children rather than younger ones. The results displayed above provide some evidence for this. A one-sample t-test with the test value set to 10 years found significant differences in seven of the vignettes. Two were significantly lower than 10-years: abuse, t (15) = -10.07, p< 01 and school, t (19) = -1.30, p < .01. Five were significantly higher than 10 years: association on the Internet, t (20) = 4.84, p < .01, magazine, t (20) = 6.13, p < .01, pierce, t (21) = 4.11, p < .01, tattoo, t (21) = 6.18, p < .01 and TV, t (21) = 5.43,

$p < .01$. The remaining vignettes had average ages that were not significantly different from 10-years.

Parent status and age for children's rights. Parental status differences in response to age for children's rights were found in two of the vignettes. The magazine and television vignettes were significantly different, $t\ (20) = 2.35$, $p < .05$ and $t\ (20) = 3.57$, $p < .01$, respectively. For both of these vignettes, parents were more likely to mention an older appropriate age than non-parents.

Regressions were run to determine if these differences were due to age rather than parent status. Only the magazine vignette showed significant results and can be found in Table 8. Note parent status is still significant.

Table 8. Summary of Regression for Appropriate Age for Magazine Vignette and Age and Parent Status

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Step 1. Age	.214	.081	.517*
Step 2. Parent Status	6.23	2.13	.905*

$R^2 = .267$ for Step 1, $R^2\Delta =$ for Step 2. $p < .05$

Adult Understanding of Children's Cognitive and Social Developmental Milestones and Rights Beliefs

Participants were asked to indicate ages that they felt children would be capable of certain cognitive and social milestones. There were 11 cognitive and 12 social items in the scale. Table 9 contains the average ages at which participants felt children are capable of cognitive milestones.

Table 9. Average Age in Years at Which Children are Believed to Achieve Cognitive Milestones

	Parents		Non-Parents		Total	
Cognitive Skills	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Think logically	5.68	3.12	8.04	4.37	7.20	4.11
Understand long-term consequences	8.56	4.34	9.82	3.66	9.36	3.95
Separate fact and fantasy	6.38	3.42	8.23	3.29	7.56	3.44
Resist peer pressure	12.16	6.47	14.00	4.04	13.31	5.13
Understand complicated directions	10.61	2.38	11.49	2.45	11.71	2.45
Strong moral principles	12.35	5.25	14.21	3.56	13.52	4.33
Understand another point of view	9.00	5.94	10.93	3.79	10.26	4.71
Understand short-term consequences	4.19	2.62	6.05	4.25	5.38	3.83

Distinguish upsetting information	5.48	3.19	7.02	3.75	6.49	3.62
Follow directions alone	7.00	3.86	8.55	3.92	8.0	3.95
Understand relationships	8.31	5.13	12.25	4.21	10.8	4.92

Parenting style and cognitive milestones. A comparison of mean age for the cognitive portion of the Developmental Milestones scale and parenting style revealed no significant overall relationship.

Age of rights endorsement and cognitive milestones. A comparison of mean age for endorsement of groups of rights and mean age for the cognitive portion of the development scale was conducted. Ages were averaged across each vignette and grouped by right and compared to the overall mean age from the cognitive portion of the developmental scale. No correlation between the two was found.

The items and means for the social portion of the Developmental Milestones scale are presented in Table 10.

Table 10 Average Age in Years at Which Children are Believed to Be Capable of Social Milestones

	Parents		Non-Parents		Total	
Social Skill	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Have a job	14.24	1.90	14.25	1.68	14.24	1.76

Date	15.85	1.20	14.58	1.50	15.04	1.52
Outing with friends	13.66	1.98	13.37	1.91	13.47	1.93
Choose own friends	5.81	4.55	6.86	3.64	6.48	4.00
Have sex	18.77	1.86	17.98	1.61	18.27	1.74
Travel town bus alone	13.94	1.98	13.30	2.83	13.53	2.56
Go to dance	12.94	2.00	12.46	2.36	12.63	2.24
Attend mixed party	12.59	4.46	11.84	3.20	12.11	3.69
Stay home alone	12.61	1.43	12.30	1.67	12.41	1.59
Go steady	16.52	2.73	15.23	1.96	15.71	2.35
Get married	22.82	3.24	21.96	2.81	22.28	2.99
Baby-sit	13.67	1.88	13.40	1.10	13.50	1.43

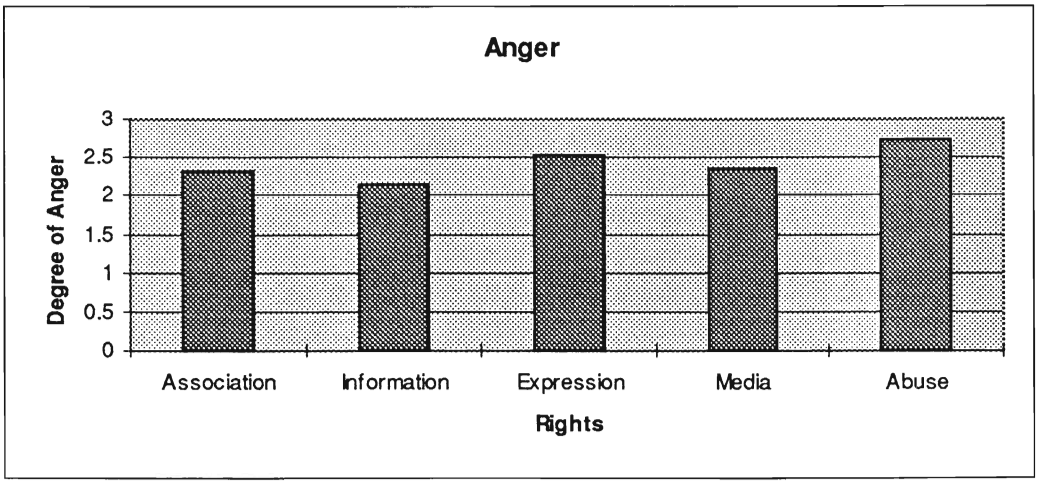
Parenting style and social milestones. A comparison of the mean age for the social portion of the Developmental Milestones scale and parenting style failed to reveal any significant relationship overall.

Age of rights endorsement and social milestones. Correlations were done to determine if there was a relationship between the age at which respondents endorsed children's rights in the interview portion of the study and the age at which respondents believed children reached certain social milestones. Ages were averaged across each vignette and grouped by right and compared to the overall mean age from the social portion of the developmental scale. Two positive correlations were found: the right to access the media, $r = .47$, $p < .05$ and the right to association, $r = .66$, $p < .01$.

Emotions in Response to Children's Rights Issues

Emotions related to the conflict around autonomy rights were measured in the interview portion of the study. After responding to the vignettes about a child's right to act of his or her own accord, participants were asked to evaluate how they might feel if the child in the stories was their own. The list of emotion words was presented and the participants rated their level of feeling on a scale from 1 = "not at all" felt to 5 = "extremely strongly" felt. A summary of the emotion words mentioned by group of rights is found in Figures 1 through 5. A full list of emotions by vignette can be found in Appendix A.

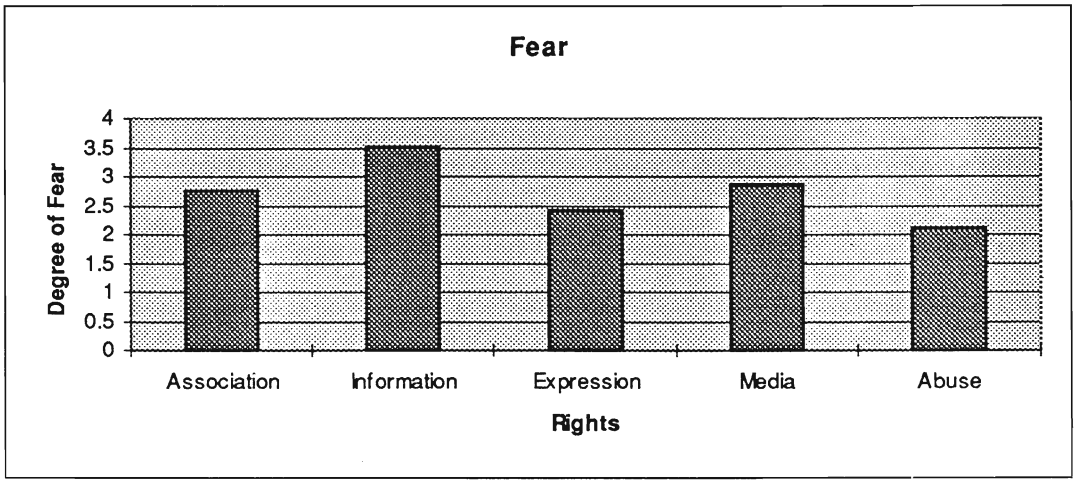
Figure 1. Degree of Expressed Anger by Right Grouping



The above figure illustrates the intensity of Anger that was mentioned by the interview participants. Overall, the rights did not generate high levels of the emotions that made up the Anger category (anger/frustration), with the result that participants were only

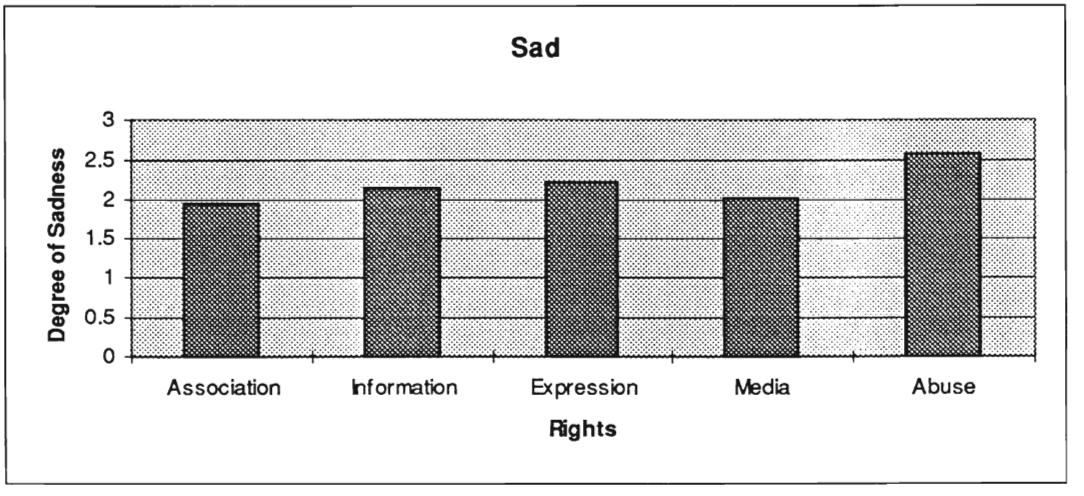
experiencing these feelings to a moderate degree. The overall rating for Anger across all rights was 2.31 (SD = 1.13) out of a possible score of five.

Figure 2. Degree of Expressed Fear by Right Grouping



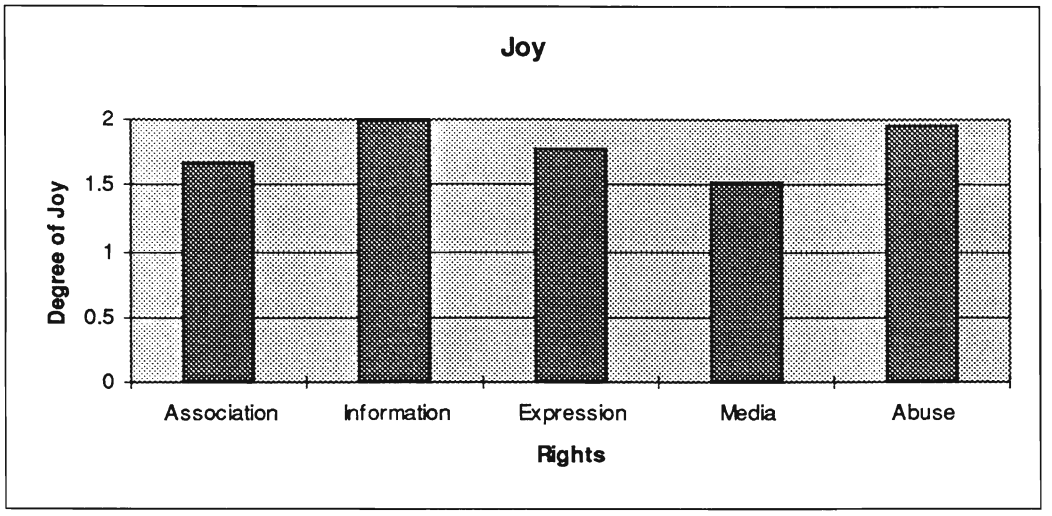
The emotion category Fear tended to by experienced to a higher degree than anger. The Fear category was made up of the words fear and anxiety. The overall rating for Fear across the five groups of rights was 2.94 (SD = 1.24) out of a possible score of five. The information rights produced the highest results.

Figure 3. Degree of Expressed Sadness by Right Grouping



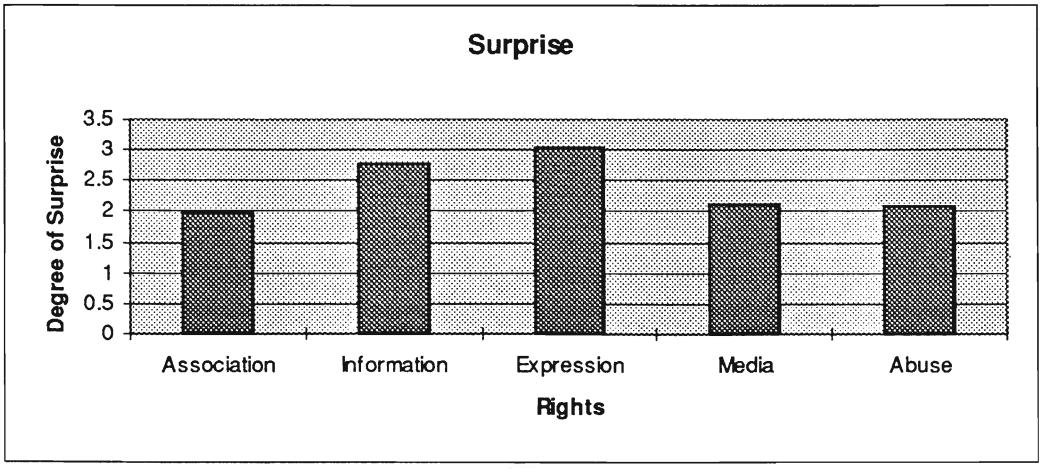
Sadness, comprised of the words sad, disappointed and guilty, was only experienced at moderate levels by participants. The overall average for Sad across all groups of rights was 2.10 (SD = 1.14) out of a possible score of five.

Figure 4. Degree of Expressed Joy by Right Grouping



This emotion was generally not experienced to a great degree by participants. This was not unexpected, insofar as happiness can be thought of as opposite to anger and sadness. The overall rating for Joy across all groups of rights was 1.72 (SD = .94) out of a possible score of five.

Figure 5. Degree of Expressed Surprise by Right Grouping



Surprise was experienced to a relatively high degree for the expression right only. Overall the rating for Surprise across the groups of rights was 2.38 (SD = 1.23) out of a possible total score of five.

Parent status differences in emotions. It was hypothesized that parents would report feeling the emotions more intensely than non-parents. Each emotion word was tested individually and parent/non-parent levels of emotion were compared. T-tests were done to test for significant differences. These results indicate that, contrary to the hypothesized effect, non-parents experienced these emotions to a greater degree of intensity than parents. There were only five instances out of a total of 130 in which differences were apparent. Two were related to the magazine vignette. Pride and happiness were significant $t(20) = 2.57$, $p < .05$ and $t(20) = 3.20$, $p < .01$, respectively. Two were related to the club vignette. Here pride and disappointment were the two emotions showing significant differences, $t(19) = 2.13$, $p < .05$ and $t(18) = 2.19$, $p < 05$ respectively. Finally, anger in the adoption vignette showed a significant difference for parents and non-parents, $t(20) =$, $p<.05$.

Explanations for emotions Participants were asked indicate why they believed they might experience a certain emotion if the child in the vignette was their child. Summaries of the explanations by right are presented in Tables 11 through 15. Note that the percentages listed do not sum to 100 due the fact that not every participant interviewed provided an explanation to the question, particularly the level of intensity they mentioned was "not at all" or "a little". A full list of vignettes can be found in Appendix A.

Table 11. Summary in Percentage of Respondents' Explanations of Anger by Rights Group

Right	Violate Expectations	Parent/Child Conflict	Society in General	Uncertain What to Do
Association	21.9	16.6	3.8	12.8
Information	15.1	6.03	4.5	9.8
Expression	40.1	14.5	1.0	6.1
Media	20.7	18.2	7.6	14.4
Abuse	13.6	13.6	0.0	22.7

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes, but Abuse with N = 11.
The Anger category is comprised of the words anger and frustration.

The Anger explanations suggest that for the majority of respondents, the violation of their expectations for a child's behaviour was the primary reason for their feelings. The feeling of frustration is evident under the "uncertain what to do".

Table 12. Summary in Percentage of Respondents' Explanations of Fear by Rights Group

Right	Negative Consequences	Uncertain What to Do
Association	74.2	5.2
Information	85.1	3.7
Expression	55.4	4.5

Media	69.7	4.5
Abuse	15.9	4.5

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes but Abuse, where N = 11.
The Fear category is comprised of the words fear and anxiety

Fear is explained as a fear of negative consequences to the children if they do as they wish. It appears to be the overriding concern for those situations where fear is expressed.

Table 13. Summary in Percentage of Respondents' Explanations of Sadness by Rights Group

Right	Violates Expectations	Negative Consequences	Parents Actions/ In-actions	Loss of Innocence
Association	24.7	8.6	12.6	2.0
Information	20.7	4.0	15.2	8.6
Expression	36.4	3.5	9.6	2.5
Media	16.1	10.1	12.1	2.5
Abuse	6.0	6.0	36.6	6.0

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes but Abuse with N = 11.
The Sadness category is comprised of the words sad, disappointed and guilty.

The explanations for sadness indicate that these feelings relate to the violation of expectations for a child's behaviour. The feeling of guilt is expressed by the parental action/inaction category.

Table 14. Summary in Percentage of Respondents' Explanations of Joy by Rights Group

Right	Child can Develop/ Explore	Shows Child is Own Person	Chance for Parent/Child Discussion
Association	13.6	18.8	3.8
Information	27.8	19.6	4.5
Expression	2.3	30.3	2.3
Media	12.1	9.8	4.6
Abuse	0.0	36.4	4.5

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes but Abuse with N = 11.
The Joy emotion category is comprised of the words happy and proud.

The Joy category indicates that participants see these conflicts as a means of promoting the child's development and an expression of their autonomy. Both explanations appear to be of importance.

Table 15. Summary by Percentage of Respondents' Explanations of Surprise by Rights Group

Right	Parents Defied	Did not Learn This at Home	Unexpected
Association	10.6	13.6	18.2
Information	1.5	40.9	18.2
Expression	22.7	1.5	44.0
Media	4.5	18.2	19.7
Abuse	4.5	4.5	

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes but Abuse vignette with N = 11.
The Surprise emotion category is comprised of only the word surprise.

The Surprise category indicates that again a violation of parental expectations is at the heart of this feeling. Expressed as "they didn't learn that at home", it appears to be the element of behavioural violations that bring out this feeling.

Discussion

Although some interesting results emerged from this study, the hypotheses regarding children's rights were not consistently supported. I will examine these hypotheses in the order in which they were originally presented, and then consider some of the implications for these findings or lack thereof. As well, the strengths and weaknesses of the study will be discussed and suggestions for future research will be made.

Values and Children's Rights

It was first hypothesized that the values considered most important in the raising of children would be those categorized as survival/protection. This hypothesis was supported. Participants were asked to both rate and rank values pertaining to raising children. Although all the values were rated as being highly important, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the ratings of values when grouped according to protection/survival, developmental and autonomy. The protection/survival values were rated highest, followed by developmental and autonomy in that order.

Similarly, when the values were grouped according to type, it was found that values pertaining to survival were ranked most important, followed by developmental and autonomy values. The most important individual value was freedom from abuse, a protection/survival value. This was followed by family (to be in a loving environment), a developmental value, and health, a protection/survival value.

The high placement of value family is not surprising. As Melton (1996) suggests, the social and economic change that has occurred since the middle of this century has

placed a strain on the nuclear family. Family values have become a rallying cry for those intent on preserving order based on authority, and even those who favour social change may feel the loss of stability in the family. The second place standing of the value of family therefore makes sense when considered in this light. Although categorized in the Convention as developmental, it may well be believed to be necessary for survival by the participants of this study.

The value ranked fifth was expression. The rather high standing of this value may be a reflection of the importance our culture places on individualism and, by extension, freedom of expression. According to Elkind (1994), our culture encourages the creation and growth of a subculture of youth, central to which is the notion of freedom of expression through dress, music, recreational activities, and individual statements characterized by tattooing and piercing. It is not unexpected, then, that respondents would rate the value of expression relatively high, as freedom of expression among the young is considered normative in the latter half of the twentieth century in Western culture.

The remaining ranks include one developmental and four autonomy values. Association, information and privacy, all autonomy values, were ranked lowest, supporting the hypothesis that these values would overall be of less importance than protection values.

If, as Olson & Zanna (1993) suggest, values are potential determinants of attitudes, what do the rankings of values imply about attitudes toward rights? Generally, I feel the rankings indicate that the rights associated with protection and development of children takes precedence over autonomy rights. That is not to say that autonomy is not

valued at all, but that it is just of less relative importance than protection. Autonomy rights for children can be potentially in conflict with those of adults, particularly parents. Further, it is suggested that adults fear that by exercising those rights, children who have not reached a certain level of maturity may come to harm (Limber & Flekkøy, 1995). This paternalistic philosophy, I would therefore suggest, is deeply ingrained in our culture. Despite the current trends in society toward fostering autonomy in the young, it still shapes our attitudes. That this may be the case will become more evident as the other results of this study are presented. I will return to these themes later in the discussion.

Although no specific hypotheses were made regarding parent and non-parent differences involving values, a post hoc examination was conducted to determine if the two groups did respond differently. This was done to see if any patterns of responding emerged for these groups that could shed light on any other differences that may be evident in the data. The only value that showed any difference in rank based on parent status was association, which was ranked higher by non-parents than parents. This finding is not likely to be explained by age differences between the samples because age did not correlate with the ranking of values. Therefore, while it is acknowledged that other factors such as education or experience may be at work, this difference could be based in part on parent status. It is possible that single adults place considerable importance on association, particularly among their peers, and therefore may be inclined to rank freedom of association more highly than married adults or those in stable partnerships.

Only one significant difference was found between parents and non-parents in the rating of values, and that was with the rating for privacy. Parents were more inclined to give it a lower rating than non-parents. Here, as with the ranking of values, age did not

correlate with any of the value ratings. That privacy might be of somewhat less importance for parents may be due to the fact that parents believe they have more authority in this matter, particularly within the home because they have experienced responsibility for a child's safety.

Children's Rights and Parenting Style

The second hypothesis was that the adults' preferred style of parenting could predict their response to rights. Smetana (1994) found that parents, regardless of parenting style, believed they had the authority to govern issues in domains that were classified as conventional or prudential in nature but that adolescents were able to make decisions on personal matters.

Linking Smetana's authority domains to the U. N. rights' domains, autonomy rights were considered to be personal in nature. It was hypothesized that all adults would support protection and developmental rights but those higher in authoritativeness or authoritarianess would be less likely to endorse autonomy rights, while adults higher in permissiveness would be more likely to support these rights. Questions about children's rights were presented in two contexts, first in a general context and second in an everyday setting with a child's age of 10 years specified. Results showed that all participants strongly endorsed autonomy rights in general, with the exception of the right to access the media. Therefore, the hypothesis in this context was generally not supported; preferred parenting style did not correlate with endorsement of three of the four autonomy rights. However, the variation in response to the media right can be attributed to parenting style; specifically, permissiveness correlated with support of this right. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported for this one autonomy right in this general context. When asked

to consider autonomy rights in everyday settings, however, there was no variation in response based on parenting style for any group.

Why the issue of access to the media should be singled out in this one context is not easily answered. An examination of the media-related rights questions in the interview portion of the study shows that these issues, generally, were not endorsed by the participants as strongly as were the other rights. The exception was the music vignette, in which the child in question asserts his or her right to listen to music with violent and sexually explicit lyrics.

A possible explanation is suggested in Smetana and Asquith (1994). Their work on areas of parental authority indicates that in certain instances parents perceive personal issues as prudential (potentially harmful to a child). This could explain the apparent lack of endorsement for the media right. If it is considered to be prudential, then adults may feel they have the authority to control this domain. That the media, in particular television, is considered to have harmful effects is well documented (Elkind, 1994; Gunter, 1994; Strasburger, 1995). Exposure to violence and the negative impact on academic standards are but two of the dangers raised. The right to the media, however, also includes the Internet and the concerns over it are becoming increasingly heard, as use of this medium becomes more common. Use of the "Net" is estimated to be growing at ten percent per month (Biggar & Myers, 1996) and the content is unregulated. It is not unlikely then that adults preferring authoritativeness and authoritarianess see this as a potentially harmful medium and one over which they need to exercise control.

Adults preferring permissiveness are overall less inclined to exercise their control in any area, including prudential, than are those preferring authoritativeness or

authoritarianess. Therefore, it may be that for this right, in the general context at least, the more permissive adults continued to see this issue as personal and are therefore more likely to allow a child's right to access the media.

The general lack of variation of endorsement of rights explained by parenting style in the vignettes indicates failure to support the hypothesis. Permissiveness was expected to positively correlate with endorsement of rights. However, regardless of type of parenting, participants tended to respond very similarly. Media rights, as noted above, were endorsed less strongly than the other participatory rights. This would again support the notion that some adults see this as a prudential issue rather than a personal one and are therefore less inclined to give a child the authority to decide.

It should also be noted at this point that the vignette related to the magazine was very low in endorsement as well. In this vignette, the child in question was asserting his or her right to read the magazine Soldier of Fortune that contained violent content. I feel the reason for this is that this vignette was considered to be a media issue (offensive material in print), not an access to information issue. As a result, therefore, it was deemed to be prudential in nature.

Children's Rights and Parent Status

In the third hypothesis, it was expected that non-parents would be more inclined to endorse autonomy rights for children than would parents. The hypothesis was not supported for the rights in general. There was no difference in response to these rights, and on the access to media right that showed variation, parent status was not a factor. There was, however, differences in response based on parent status in the media rights vignettes. Non-parents were significantly more likely to support the group of media rights

than parents. However, when media rights were considered individually, only the right of access to the Internet was different. Parents and non-parents did not respond differently to unchecked TV viewing and listening to music with violent lyrics.

The age of the participant was not correlated with response in this instance. Therefore, while there seems to be confirmation of the hypothesis regarding parent status and rights in an everyday context, the results are not unequivocal.

Child Development and Rights

The fourth hypothesis related to the issue of the developmental nature of endorsing children's rights. The published literature indicates that adults are more likely to support an autonomy right for an older child than for a younger one. This appears to be the case in this study. The four autonomy rights tended to be granted to children of at least 10 years of age. It was apparent that participants did range considerably in their responses. An examination of the media vignette for TV, the magazine, two of the expression vignettes and the association Internet vignette all show that the median ages given were considerably higher than 10 years. The most interesting of these is the media Internet distribution where the ages 10 years and 16 years both received an equal number of responses. Although this pattern cannot be accounted for by either parent status or age of the participant, it does appear that there is some indecision as to the most appropriate age to access material via the Internet.

There may be possible explanations for this. First, the age of 10 years might have been mentioned as frequently as it was because that was the age used in the vignettes. Therefore, in some way participants may have been primed for that age. It is also possible that, since that age is around the time of the development of concrete operations, that

adults recognize a readiness in children to use the Internet. The age of 16 years may have received the nominations it did because it is considered a "turning point" age in adolescence. This is the age for acquiring a driver's license and is often the time an adolescent takes on a job outside the home. Therefore, culturally, this age may hold significance in signaling a move closer to adulthood, and in this case, access to the Internet.

I feel that the reason these vignettes stand out can again be related the prudential nature of the story. There is in each of these situations a threat, not necessarily overt but present none the less, of harm to the child should he or she act autonomously. I believe that participants are responding to this threat and therefore are deciding that older children are more capable of making these choices than younger ones. Some evidence for this can be found in the correlation between ages given in the vignettes and the social milestone scale. The ages given in the vignettes tend to be in the mid-to-late teen years.

Parent/non-parent differences. Only two parent/non-parent differences were found, both media related. Non-parents were more likely than parents to let younger children view TV as they wished and read a magazine with violent content.

Emotions, Parent Status and Children's Rights

The fifth hypothesis dealt with the emotional nature of the parent-child conflict over autonomy rights. It was expected that parents would express a greater intensity of emotion than non-parents. The results failed to support this. In only five instances out of a total of 130, were there any significant differences between the groups and, contrary to

expectations, the emotions were experienced more intensely by the non-parents than the parents.

As well, there appears to be little logical or intuitive relationship between the emotions that were of significant difference and the vignettes that elicited them. Only in the magazine vignette did an emotional category show an understandable relationship. Here the Joy category, with emotion words happy and proud, was significant. In this vignette, the content of the magazine was portrayed as unsuitable for a child. Parents were generally not as happy or proud that their child might choose this material than non-parents.

Overall, emotions were not experienced with great intensity. The only category that approached high levels was the fear category. The Joy category was, generally speaking, not strongly experienced in any of the vignettes, indicating that although participants did not express high levels of negative feelings, neither did they experience high levels of positive emotions.

A possible explanation for this finding of greater intensity in emotion among non-parents, and generally low levels of feelings overall, can be found in Dix (1991). While acknowledging the highly emotional nature of the parent/child relationship, Dix notes that effective parents must regulate their emotions to ensure the best child outcomes. Emotions, particularly negative ones, that are excessive can be harmful to the relationship. The fact that the intensity of emotion noted by participants in the interviews was of a moderate degree, generally speaking, may be a reflection of that understanding of the potentially harmful nature of excessive emotions.

It is also likely however, that the design of the study using hypothetical situations was such that participants did not find any of the vignettes to be very evocative emotionally. Further, the small number of differences noted between participant groups may only be isolated incidents and not indicative of anything more than a chance occurrence.

Explanations for emotional responses to rights issues. Although no specific hypothesis was associated with the explanations for emotions elicited by the vignettes, it is of interest to consider reasons why adults might experience certain emotions as they relate to children's rights. The response categories generated out of the interviews aligned with the emotional antecedents set out in Shaver et al. (1987). Fear responses were centred around loss and threat of harm, in this case to a child rather than to the parent. Anger focused on the violation of expectations and the frustration of relationship disruption. Sadness was related to undesirable outcomes for the child and the violation of the expectation of the parent/child relationship. Finally, Joy was related to the sense of accomplishment as a child develops and becomes his or her own person.

Although the results are not conclusive on the issue of emotions, there could well be implications for support for children's rights from these findings. Of the five emotion categories tested, fear showed the strongest results and elicited the strongest overall level of intensity. This would support the earlier contention that adults may construe situations involving a child's desire to exercise a participatory right as prudential, or potentially harmful, in nature. In these everyday situations in which a child asserts his or her right to decide, adults may be reluctant to let a child act autonomously, at least at the age of ten years.

Is it possible that by reducing the fear adults may have concerning the exercising of participatory rights, that the support for rights could be strengthened? I would suggest that reducing the fear that adults have for the safety of children is not likely or even desirable. It is unlikely to happen simply because overriding concern for the protection of children is too strongly ingrained in our culture at this time. We fear loss of innocence and real harm that may befall children, and unfortunately these fears are not unfounded.

Strengths of This Study

This study was an attempt to look at a number of factors that might predict how adults feel about children's rights, based on the premise that adults ratify and defend those rights. Although recent studies have looked at children's understanding of their rights, of late there is little evidence in the literature that adults have been asked to consider the issue. Therefore, within this study, some areas of research have been uniquely linked. One of the most important notions explored was the role of values about raising children. It was clear that values that pertain to autonomy rights are of less importance than protection and developmental values when the three groups are considered together. This finding speaks to the relative importance that autonomy holds for adults and is relevant to a fuller understanding of how our society views the rights of children.

Further, the contrast of the consideration of rights in an abstract sense and again in an everyday context was valuable. The literature on rights tends to discussion on a philosophical level, at the expense of the mundane. By considering rights from a practical point of view, some of the problems of adult support for rights were acknowledged. The most apparent difficulty with rights for children is, of course, the issue of age of the child.

Limitations of This Study

As noted above in some of the explanations for the various findings, there are a number of limitations in this study that indicate the results should be approached with caution.

Sample differences. First, the most apparent problem is the significant age difference between the parent and the non-parent samples. In addition, the samples varied on income and education. That these demographic indicators were also significantly different is not unexpected, as education and income would be expected to increase with age. Because of this relationship, these two factors were not analyzed separately. Although during the planning of the study it was hoped that the two groups would be close enough in age to avoid potential confound, the recruitment locations for parents did not yield the young sample needed. Generally, the parents were in their early 30's, while the non-parent group was approximately 20 years old. While age was controlled where relevant, future research should include population samples that are closer in age. Recruiting such a sample may be best accomplished by looking outside a University for participants. Using undergraduate subjects, who are on average in their early twenties, obliges researchers to find a similar age group of parents. In future, it may be more advantageous to find parents and look for an age-matched non-parent sample through advertising.

Sample sizes. Although the self-selected interview/non-interview groups showed no significance differences on demographics and parenting style measures, the small number of interview participants poses problems of reliability for results coming from that portion of the study. As noted before, the attrition rate of participants willing to take part

in the interview was high. Therefore caution must be applied when trying to interpret any information coming out of the interview.

One of the causes for the attrition was the fact that student participants were not interested in taking part in the interview because it did not provide them with course credit. The percentage of parents who agreed to be interviewed, and who subsequently were, was very high compared to the students. By eliminating student participants, future researchers may find a higher rate of completed interviews, should this format be used.

Gender differences. This issue was addressed only in passing in the present study, due to the lack of male parent participants. While a few non-parent men were part of the study, no fathers took part. The responses of the men were not eliminated from the study and some gender comparisons were made. Previous research (Rogers & Wrightman, 1978) into adult attitudes toward children's rights has noted some small male/female differences. Future research in this area must include more men, and in particular those who are fathers, in order to contribute to the children's rights discussion. Finding fathers may be easier if the recruitment of couples was undertaken, either through daycare centres or parent/child centres. Workplace recruitment might also yield fathers and older non-parent males in future.

Methodology. The interview methodology used was that of the hypothetical vignette. This has been used reliably in other children's rights research (Bohrnstedt et al., 1981; Ruck et al. 1998;). In the present study I attempted to have participants consider children's rights in an everyday context in order to determine how attitudes might differ from the more philosophical debate. The format proved serviceable for the actual running of the study; however, there were some problems in the content of the vignettes. The

challenge of making situations that are realistic and capture the spirit of the rights issue is not easily met. In the present study, some of the vignettes overlapped in content. A right to association vignette (meeting someone over the Internet) and one of the right to information vignettes (reading a magazine with violent content) featured issues that were more clearly aligned with the right to access the media. An examination of responses appeared to indicate that participants were responding to the content as media issues. Future research needs to focus more closely on the content of vignettes in order to eliminate overlap. Also, the attempt to elicit emotional expression about the vignettes proved weak. Participants did not generally express high degrees of emotion. It may be that the stories were not realistic enough to generate relatively strong feelings.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations noted above, there was some interesting information found in this study and some conclusions that may be drawn from it. The purpose of this study was to gain some insight into what adults believe about children's rights. The focus was on autonomy rights, rather than protection or nurturance rights, because it was determined that protection rights would not provide any real variation in response. It was felt that adults would be highly supportive of protection rights but would be less so of autonomy rights. With that in mind, four autonomy rights were selected: access to information, freedom of association, access to the media and freedom of expression.

The majority of adults supported autonomy rights. This was certainly the case when rights were presented in a generalized context, without a child's age specified. This suggests that adults believe children have autonomy rights on an abstract level. When the question of endorsing rights was embedded in an everyday context, the expected variation

in endorsement was noted based on the child's age. This serves to confirm what has been evident in the literature; for many autonomy issues, adults are more comfortable giving endorsement of a child's right to act to older rather than younger children.

Was the confirmation of support for rights based on age inevitable? Archard (1993) would suggest that this is the case. He points out that what we think about children influences the way we act toward them and our actions in turn confirm our thinking. If we think that children are not capable of handling autonomy rights until a particular age, then we will not be willing to support those rights until they have reached that age. By not giving children autonomy rights until perhaps middle childhood or adolescence, we confirm our notion that they are not ready for them. However, Prilleltensky (1994) would argue that this approach to autonomy rights may impede the development of a sense of mastery and self-efficacy that is necessary for optimal emotional growth. Ignoring a child's need to make decisions for himself or herself from early on may undermine one of the main components of healthy development.

The autonomy rights looked at in this study were rights of freedom, which implies that the holder of the right is capable of making and exercising choices around that right. Respondents to this study for the most part agreed that children have these rights. However, they also felt that the rights in question require others to protect the interests of the rights' holders. This point of view is very much in tune with the "caretaker" perspective. By controlling the exercising of a child's right, adults preserve some quality of the child that is considered important. That quality is innocence and the concept of the separateness of childhood.

The history of childhood has been one that has seen increasing separation of children and adults. We have been divided over the last century and a half in work and play. Public education and the increased understanding of the nature of children has fostered and encouraged this separation. This unique time of childhood has come to be romanticized in Western culture and a time of life adults look back on as one of innocence (Cunningham, 1995). Along with this evolving notion of childhood separateness and innocence has come a weakening of confidence on the part of adults in their authority to protect this innocence, particularly evident in the last half of this century. The weakening of authority is due to a number of factors, including reliance on experts (educators and psychologists) for the "best" way to raise children, the commercial value of children as consumers in the market place, the changing nature of the family itself, and the legal assertion of the rights of children (Cunningham, 1995; Elkind, 1994). Confusion over what is best for a child results. Rights to autonomy are at odds with the rights to be a child, as adults wrestle with an evolving world view.

The second purpose of this study was to attempt to determine what, if anything, might predict differences in responses to children's autonomy rights. Parenting style and status failed to give any meaningful variation, except for permissiveness in one instance. Upon reflection, this is not a surprising result. Our present cultural zeitgeist is toward the encouragement of children to claim their autonomy rights, yet the world we inhabit is one where exploitation of children is everywhere.

Is there a contradiction here? That we encourage autonomy rights for our children, while at the same time trying to control their exercising those rights? I feel the answer is yes, but the contradiction is one that is inherent in the adult/child relationship at the end of

the Twentieth century. Future research should look more closely at this apparent contradiction and consider some of the questions surrounding it. Are adults confused about children's rights, as the literature and the tentative results of this study suggest? What might be other predictors of adult attitudes towards children's rights? Factors to consider in answering these questions might include the ages of participants' children and how relevant these issues are in their own lives. Cultural differences may be explored and comparisons made between groups that value autonomy and those of a more collectivist nature. And, as mentioned earlier, a more detailed study of gender differences needs to be made.

It is without doubt that our society is experiencing a transformation on the technological, economic, political and social fronts. It is of little surprise that our relationship to our children should be transforming as well. Is our culture heading inevitably toward the fusing of the worlds of the child and the adult?

End Notes

1. It should be noted that the questionnaire package included two versions of the Parental Authority Questionnaire. The original version was designed for reporting on the style of parenting one's parents favoured. This version was used by Jason Witteveen in his research. The modified version of the PAQ was designed as a measure of one's own parenting style. This was used by both the author and the undergraduate researcher.

2. This study was conducted, in part, by two researchers working in the same lab at Brock University. The principal researcher was the author of this paper and the work was undertaken as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Psychology. The second researcher was Jason Witteveen, an fourth year student completing his Honours degree in Psychology. A portion of the data was shared, specifically the questionnaire data. The interview data was used by the author only. The researchers collaborated on the selection of questionnaires and the recruitment of participants from the University. Community participants were recruited by the author.

3. A pilot study was conducted to establish the validity of hypothetical vignettes used in the final project and to determine what method of delivery would best suit the needs of the researcher and the participants. Participants were recruited from second and third year classes at Brock University. The vignettes tested were generated by the researcher and her supervisor and dealt with issues that incorporated a specific right placed in an everyday situation. Each situation was designed to produce a conflict between a child and his/her parents. In total 25 vignettes were tested. A subset of randomly selected vignettes was presented to participants during a face-to-face interview. The participant followed the script as the researcher read the vignette and asked the questions. Responses were taped and notes were taken. From the pilot study the final number and content of the vignettes was selected. Only those vignettes that showed some variation in response were left in the final study.

4. During the pilot testing tape recording was used to supplement the notes taken by the researcher. However, since it was determined face-to-face interviews would not be possible in the final study, a method was sought to try to tape interviews over the phone. The equipment used proved unreliable, and although four interviews were taped the quality was poor. It was decided to abandon this method and to rely on the handwritten notes taken during the course of the interview.

5. A short debriefing script was used. A copy can be found in the Appendix. The nature of the study was explained and any questions the interviewee had about the study were answered.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Summary of Yes Responses in Percentages by Parent Status in Interview Vignette

		Parents	Non-Parents	Total
Right	Vignette	% Yes	% Yes	% Yes
Association	Club	50	89	67
	Friend	50	80	64
	Internet	45	60	43
Information	Birth Control	83	90	86
	Magazine	9	50	27
	Adoption	92	90	91
Expression	School	92	100	95
	Pierce	50	50	50
	Tattoo	33	40	36
Media	TV	0	20	9
	Music	67	78	68
	Internet	42	100	68
Abuse		100	89	77

Note: Parent Sample N = 12 for all vignettes except abuse with N = 9.
Non-Parent Sample N = 10 except for club and music with N = 9.

Figure A1. Degree of Expressed Anger by Vignette

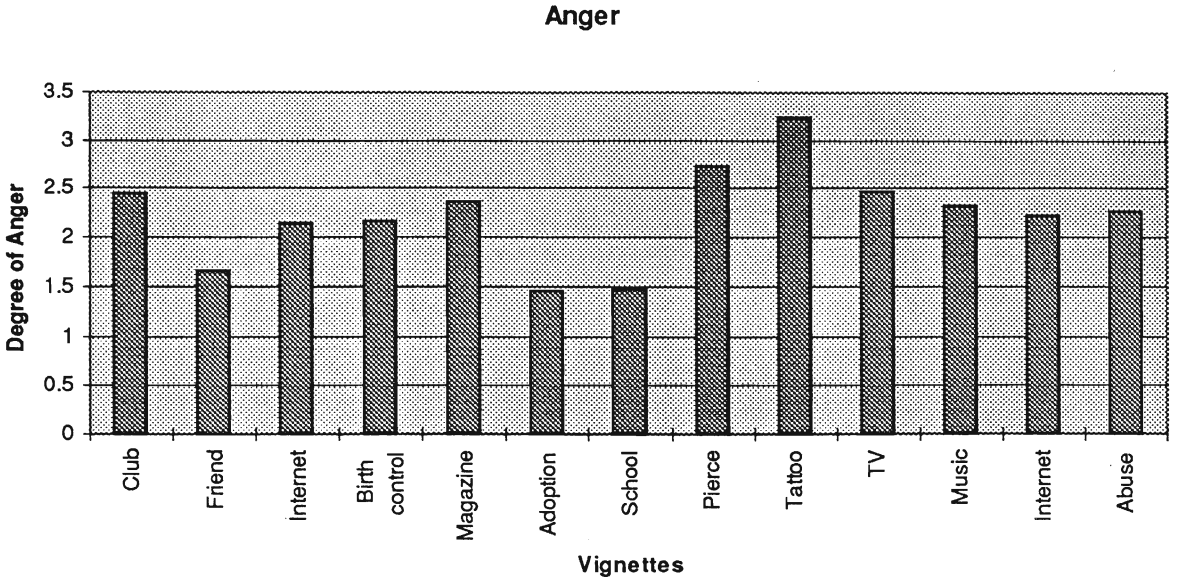

Figure A2. Degree of Expressed Fear by Vignette

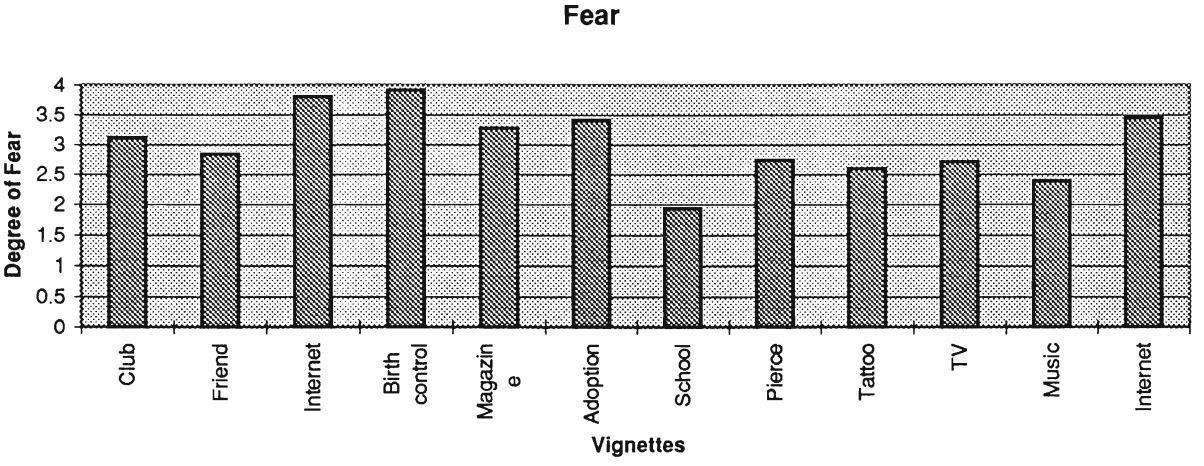

Figure A3. Degree of Expressed Sadness by Vignette

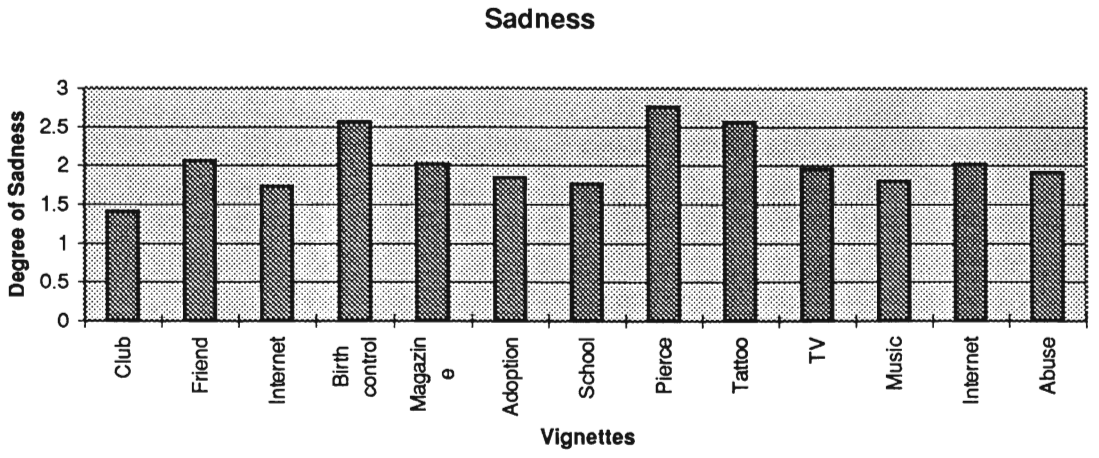

Figure A4. Degree of Expressed Joy by Vignette

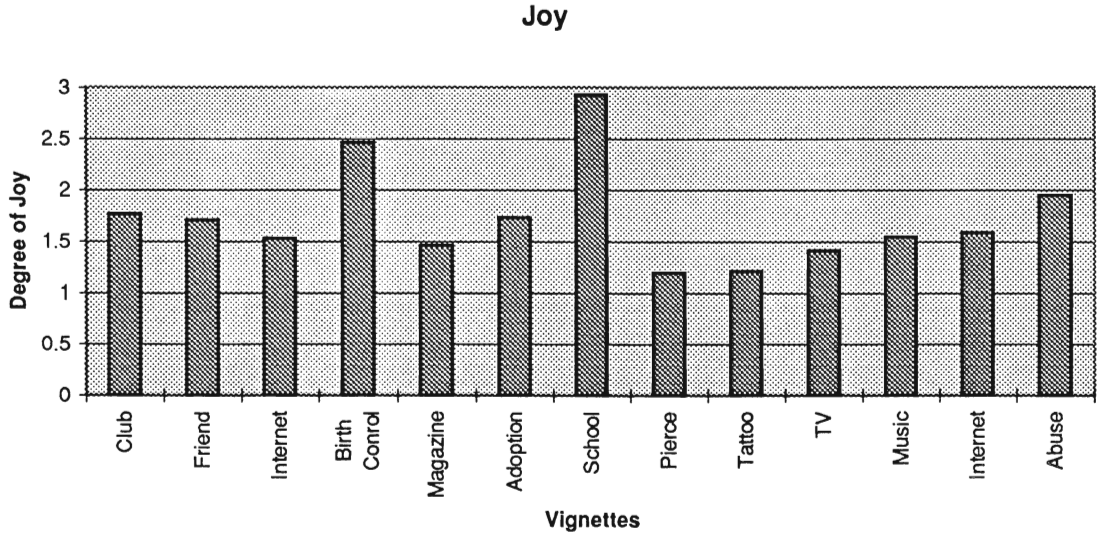

Figure A5. Degree of Expressed Surprise by Vignette

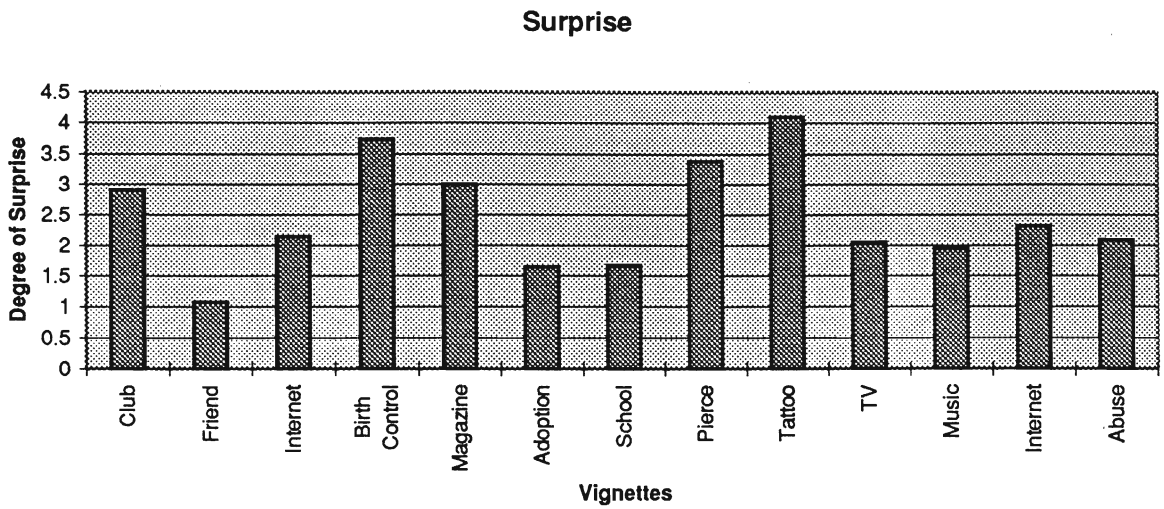

Table A2. Summary of Responses in Percentage of Emotion Category Anger by Vignette

Right	Vignette	Violate Expectations	Parent/Child Conflict	Society in General	Uncertain What to Do
Association	Club	27.2	20.4	4.5	13.6
	Friend	25.0	18.1	0.0	11.3
	Internet	13.6	11.3	6.8	13.6
Information	Birth Control	27.2	0.0	4.5	13.6
	Adoption	2.2	2.2	0.0	13.6
	Magazine	15.9	15.9	9.1	15.9
Expression	School	9.1	4.5	0.0	6.8
	Pierce	45.4	0.0	2.3	2.3
	Tattoo	65.9	9.1	0.0	9.1

Media	Television	20.4	18.2	11.3	9.1
	Music	22.7	25.0	0.0	15.9
	Internet	18.9	11.4	11.4	18.2
Abuse	Slapping	13.6	13.6	0.0	22.7

Note: N = 22 for all vignette, but Abuse with N = 11.
The Anger category is comprised of the words anger and frustration.

Table A3. Summary of Responses in Percentage of the Emotion Category Fear by Vignette

Right	Vignette	Negative Consequences	Uncertain What to Do
Association	Club	84.1	2.2
	Friend	52.2	9.1
	Internet	86.3	4.5
Information	Birth Control	86.3	4.5
	Adoption	87.0	2.3
	Magazine	82.0	4.5
Expression	School	34.1	11.4
	Pierce	66.0	2.0
	Tattoo	66.0	0.0
Media	Television	61.3	9.1
	Music	61.3	2.2

	Internet	86.4	2.3
Abuse	Slapping	15.9	4.5

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes but Abuse, where N = 11.
The Fear category is comprised of the words fear and anxiety

Table A4. Summary of Responses in Percentage of Emotion Category Sadness by Vignette

Right	Vignette	Violates Expectations	Negative Consequences	Parents Actions/ In-actions	Loss of Innocence
Association	Club	33.3	4.5	15.1	0.0
	Friend	30.3	12.1	13.6	3.0
	Internet	10.6	9.1	9.1	3.0
Information	Birth Control	25.7	4.5	15.2	15.2
	Adoption	13.6	3.0	18.2	3.0
	Magazine	22.7	4.5	12.1	7.6
Expression	School	28.8	1.5	10.6	0.0
	Pierce	36.4	4.5	9.1	3.0
	Tattoo	43.9	4.5	9.1	4.5
Media	Television	22.7	7.5	10.6	3.0
	Music	12.1	9.1	12.1	3.0
	Internet	13.6	13.6	13.6	1.5
Abuse	Slapping	6.0	6.0	36.6	6.0

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes but Abuse with N = 11.
The Sadness category is comprised of the words sad, disappointed and guilty.

Table A5. Summary of Responses in Percentage of Emotion Category Joy by Vignette

Right	Vignette	Child can Develop/ Explore	Shows Child is Own Person	Chance for Parent/Child Discussion
Association	Club	13.6	20.1	2.3
	Friend	11.4	27.2	2.3
	Internet	15.9	9.1	6.8
Information	Birth Control	40.1	20.1	6.8
	Adoption	31.8	25.0	4.5
	Magazine	11.4	13.6	2.3
Expression	School	6.8	65.9	4.5
	Pierce	0.0	9.1	2.3
	Tattoo	0.0	15.9	0.0
Media	Television	9.1	11.4	2.3
	Music	9.1	13.6	9.1
	Internet	18.2	4.5	2.3
Abuse	Slapping	0.0	36.4	4.5

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes but Abuse with N = 11.
The Joy emotion category is comprised of the words happy and proud.

Table A6. Summary of Responses by Percentage of the Emotion Category Surprise by Vignette

Right	Vignette	Parents Defied	Did not Learn This at Home	Unexpected
Association	Club	13.6	13.6	27.3
	Friend	9.1	13.6	4.5
	Internet	9.1	13.6	22.7
Information	Birth Control	4.5	81.8	0.0
	Adoption	0.0	4.5	27.3
	Magazine	0.0	36.4	27.3
Expression	School	9.1	0.0	27.3
	Pierce	31.8	0.0	45.5
	Tattoo	27.3	4.5	59.1
Media	Television	4.5	18.2	9.1
	Music	4.5	18.2	13.6
	Internet	4.5	18.2	36.4
Abuse	Slapping	4.5	4.5	22.7

Note: N = 22 for all vignettes but Abuse vignette with N = 11.
The Surprise emotion category comprises only the word surprise.

BROCK UNIVERSITY
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF STUDY: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BELIEFS ABOUT PARENTING

Researchers: Professor Linda Rose-Krasnor and **Researchers** Roslyn Ralph and Jason Witteveen.

Name of Participant:_____(please print)

I understand that the primary purpose of this study is to examine the issue of children's rights. I will complete a series of questionnaires that are designed to gather information about parenting style, parenting values, moral reasoning and child development as they relate to children's rights. I also understand that I may be contacted by the researcher for a follow-up interview, either by telephone or in person. During the interview I will respond to a series of hypothetical vignettes about children's rights. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions without penalty.

I understand that a code number will be assigned to my data to preserve my anonymity, and that no one, with the exception of the research personnel named above, will have access to the data records.

I consent to filling out the questionnaire. **Circle YES or NO**

I consent to have the researcher call me for a follow-up interview on children's rights.
Circle YES or NO

_____ _____ _____
Participant Signature Date Phone #

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, call Roslyn Ralph at (905) 688-5550 ext. 4419 or Professor Linda Rose-Krasnor at (905) 688-5550 ext. 3870.

Feedback about the use of the data collected will be available by May 1998. If you desire a copy please put your name and address on the bottom of the form. A written explanation will be provided upon request. Please keep a copy of this consent form for your information.

I have fully explained the procedures of this study to the above volunteer.

_____ _____
Researcher Signature Date

Thank you for taking part in this research.

The attached series of questionnaires will take about one hour to finish. Each questionnaire has its own instructions, so please be sure to read carefully. We would like to have the completed forms back in about a week. When you have finished the questionnaire, please drop the sealed envelope in the box provided at the Day Care Centre.

As a token of our appreciation for your time we would like to offer you a lottery ticket. An envelope containing a "scratch and win" ticket will be left for you at the Centre.

As well, you are asked to indicate on the consent form whether you would be willing to take part in the interview portion of the study. It is hoped that you will consent. If you are selected for an interview you will be contacted as soon as possible and a time will be arranged. Interviews will be conducted over the phone in the evening.

Thank you for helping us.

Introduction

In 1979 the United Nations wrote the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Under this Convention children everywhere were guaranteed the right to a happy and healthy life. Some of the rights deal with children's basic needs to food, shelter, health care and education. Others deal with things like making their own decisions about their lives.

Canada was one of the many countries to sign this Convention. What we hope to do with this study is to understand what people like yourself think about children's rights. We are assuming that all people believe children have the right to proper care and nutrition. What we are interested in, is what people think about letting children make decisions for themselves. Sometimes those things a child may want to do are different from what their parents want. We hope to find out what kinds of things people will let children do and how old they should be to do it.

Because people have different opinions about how to raise children, we are also interested in parenting. We will ask questions about what you feel is the best way to raise children and what you think are the most important things to consider when you bring up a child.

This study is designed to gather information about these issues. Whether you have children or not, you probably have an opinion on how children should be treated. There are no right or wrong answers. We are asking for your opinion only. We thank you for your time and for helping us in this important research.

Children's Rights and Beliefs About Parenting

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please complete the following:

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: (circle) Female Male

3. Ethnic Group: _____

4. Language (spoken in the home):_____

5. Highest level of education completed: _____

6. Occupation: _____

7. Annual Household Income: please indicate the range that is appropriate.

Under $10,000 _____
$10,000 - $20,000 _____
$20,000 - $30,000 _____
$30,000 - $40,000 _____
$40,000 - $50,000 _____
$50,000 - $60,000 _____
$60,000 - $70,000 _____
$70,000 - $80,000 _____
$80,000+ _____

8. Marital Status: (circle) Married Single Divorced

9. Gender and ages of children:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please answer the following by circling Yes or No:

1. Do you believe children have the right to seek, receive and impart information?

YES NO

2. Do you believe children have the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly?

YES NO

3. Do you believe children have the right to access to media in all its forms and the information contained therein?

YES NO

4. Do you believe children have the right to express an opinion and to have it listened to?

YES NO

5. Do you believe children have the right to be protected from abuse, neglect or violence?

YES NO

Parental Authority Questionnaire - Modified Version

Please read each of the following statements carefully. Circle the number to the right that most closely fits how you feel about each statement. In each case 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

1. I feel that in a well run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Even if my children disagree with me, I feel that it is for their own good if I force them to conform to what I think is right. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Whenever I tell my children to do something, I expect them to do it immediately without asking any questions. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Once family policy has been established, I discuss the reasoning behind the policy with my children. 1 2 3 4 5

5. I always encourage verbal give-and-take whenever my children feel the family rules and restrictions are unreasonable. 1 2 3 4 5

6. I feel that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what I might want. 1 2 3 4 5

7. I do not allow my children to question any decision I make. 1 2 3 4 5

8. I direct the activities and decisions of my children through reasoning and discipline. 1 2 3 4 5

9. I feel that more force should be used by parents in order to get children to behave the way they are supposed to. 1 2 3 4 5

10. I do not feel that children need to obey rules and regulations of behaviour simply because someone in authority has established them.* 1 2 3 4 5

11. I feel children should know what is expected of them in the family, but they should feel free to discuss those expectations when they feel that they are unreasonable. 1 2 3 4 5

12. I feel that wise parents should teach their early just who is boss in the family. 1 2 3 4 5

13. I seldom give my children expectations and guidelines for their behaviour. 1 2 3 4 5

14. Most of the time I do what my children want when making family decisions. 1 2 3 4 5

15. I consistently give direction and guidance to my children in a rational and objective way. 1 2 3 4 5

16. I get very upset if my children try to disagree with me. 1 2 3 4 5

17. I feel that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they grow up. 1 2 3 4 5

18. I let my children know what behaviuor I expect of them, and if they don't meet those expectations, I punish them. 1 2 3 4 5

19. I let my children decide most things for themselves without a lot of direction from me. 1 2 3 4 5

20. I take my children's opinions into consideration when making decisions, but I won't decide for something simply because the children want it. 1 2 3 4 5

21. I do not view myself as responsible for directing and guiding my children's behaviour as they grow up. 1 2 3 4 5

22. I have clear standards for my children, but I am willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of my individual children. 1 2 3 4 5

23. I give my children direction for their behaviour and I expect them to follow my direction, but I am willing to listen to their concerns and to discuss that direction with them. 1 2 3 4 5

24. I allow my children to form their own point of view on family matters and generally I allow them to decide for themselves what to do. 1 2 3 4 5

25. I feel that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to do. 1 2 3 4 5

26. I often tell my children exactly what I want them to do and how I expected them to do it. 1 2 3 4 5

27. I give my children clear direction for the behaviours and activities, but I also understand when they disagree with me. 1 2 3 4 5

28. I do not direct the behaviours, activities and desires of my children. 1 2 3 4 5

29. My children know what I expect of them and I insist that they conform to my expectations simply out of respect for my authority. 1 2 3 4 5

30. If I make a decision in the family that hurts my children, I am willing to discuss that decision with them and to admit that I made a mistake. 1 2 3 4 5

Children's Development Questionnaire

The following is a list of developments that take place in the life of a child. At what age do you think an average child might be able to do each thing? Take your time and consider each one carefully. Please indicate the age you believe the typical child might reach these steps.

	Age (in years)
1. think logically	_____
2. understand the long term consequences of actions	_____
3. tell the difference between fact from fantasy	_____
4. resist peer pressure	_____
5. read and understand complicated directions	_____
6. have strong enough moral principles to resist peer pressure	_____
7. understand another person's point of view	_____
8. understand the short term consequences of actions	_____
9. knowing what information might be upsetting to them	_____
10. follow directions when parent is not around	_____
11. understand abstract concepts like relationships	_____

On average how old should a child be to:

	Age (in years)
1. get a job	_____
2. go out on a date	_____
3. go out on an unsupervised outing with friends	_____
4. choose their own friends	_____
5. start having sex	_____
6. travel alone on a bus	_____
7. go to a dance	_____
8. attend a mixed party	_____
9. be left home alone	_____
10. have a steady boyfriend/girlfriend	_____
11. get married	_____
12. babysit	_____

The Scale of Values for Raising Children

We all have values we use as guiding principles in our lives. Among these values are those that relate to our beliefs about children. Whether or not you are a parent, you will likely have feelings about how children should be treated and what is necessary for their healthy growth and development.

Below are 10 values listed in alphabetical order. Consider how important each value is in the raising of children. Rate each on the accompanying scale where: 1 = not at all important, 2 = a little important, 3 = somewhat important, 4 = very important and 5 = extremely important.

Abuse and Neglect (to be free from harm)	1 2 3 4 5
Association (to choose own friends)	1 2 3 4 5
Education (to be adequate for future endeavors)	1 2 3 4 5
Expression (to express opinions about what affects them)	1 2 3 4 5
Family (to be in a loving environment)	1 2 3 4 5
Health (to have proper nutrition and health care)	1 2 3 4 5
Information (to know about the world around them)	1 2 3 4 5
Play (to have fun and leisure activities)	1 2 3 4 5
Privacy (within the family home)	1 2 3 4 5
Thoughts and Conscience (to form own set of beliefs)	1 2 3 4 5

Please rank the order of importance for the values listed below, where 1 is most important value to you and 10 is least important value to you. No two values should have the same number.

Abuse and Neglect _____
(to be free from harm)

Association _____
(to be choose own friends)

Education _____
(to be adequate for future endeavors)

Expression _____
(to express opinions about what affects them)

Family _____
(to be in a loving environment)

Health _____
(to have proper nutrition and health care)

Information _____
(to know about the world around them)

Play _____
(to have fun and leisure activities)

Privacy _____
(within the family home)

Thoughts and Conscience _____
(to form own set of beliefs)

Parental Authority Questionnaire

Instructions:

For each of the following statements, circle the number on the 5-point scale(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your parents. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your parents during your years of growing up at home. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. We are looking for your overall impression regarding each statement. Be sure not to omit any items.

(1) While I was growing up my parents felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do. 1 2 3 4 5

(2) Even if their children didn't agree with them, my parents felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what they thought was right. 1 2 3 4 5

(3) Whenever my parents told me to do something as I was growing up, they expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions. 1 2 3 4 5

(4) As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my parents discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family. 1 2 3 4 5

(5) My parents have always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable. 1 2 3 4 5

(6) My parents have always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want. 1 2 3 4 5

(7) As I was growing up my parents did not allow me to question any decision that they had made. 1 2 3 4 5

(8) As I was growing up my parents directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline. 1 2 3 4 5

(9) My parents have always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are suppose to. 1 2 3 4 5

(10) As I was growing up my parents did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behaviour simply because someone in authority had established them. 1 2 3 4 5

(11) As I was growing up I knew what my parents expected of me in my family but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my parents when I felt that they were unreasonable. 1 2 3 4 5

(12) My parents felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family. 1 2 3 4 5

(13) As I was growing, my parents seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behaviour. 1 2 3 4 5

(14) Most of the time as I was growing up my parents did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions. 1 2 3 4 5

(15) As the children in my family were growing up, my parents consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways. 1 2 3 4 5

(16) As I was growing up my parents would get very upset if I tried to disagree with them. 1 2 3 4 5

(17) My parents feel that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up. 1 2 3 4 5

(18) As I was growing, my parents let me know what behaviours they expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, they punished me. 1 2 3 4 5

(19) As I was growing up my parents allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from them. 1 2 3 4 5

(20) As I was growing up my parents took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but they would not decide to do something simply because the children wanted it. 1 2 3 4 5

(21) My parents did not view themselves as responsible for directing and guiding my behaviour as I was growing up. 1 2 3 4 5

(22) My parents had clear standards of behaviour for the children in our home as I was growing up, but they were willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family. 1 2 3 4 5

(23) My parents gave me direction for my behaviour and activities as I was growing up and they expected me to follow their direction, but they were always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me. 1 2 3 4 5

(24) As I was growing up my parents allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and they generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do. 1 2 3 4 5

(25) My parents have always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up. 1 2 3 4 5

(26) As I was growing up my parents often told me exactly what they wanted me to do and how they expected me to do it. 1 2 3 4 5

(27) As I was growing up my parents gave me clear direction for my behaviours and activities, but they were also understanding when I disagreed with them. 1 2 3 4 5

(28) As I was growing up my parents did not direct the behaviours, activities, and desires of the children in the family. 1 2 3 4 5

(29) As I was growing up I knew what my parents expected of me in the family and they insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for their authority. 1 2 3 4 5

(30) As I was growing up, if my parents made a decision in the family that hurt me, they were willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if they had made a mistake. 1 2 3 4 5

Rights Vignettes

There was a series of thirteen rights vignettes used in the study. Each was written with both a boy and a girl as protagonists. Therefore, a total of 26 stories were available for use in the interviews. Only one of each of the vignettes is listed below.

Seek, Receive and Impart Information (Autonomy)

Pat has a steady girlfriend and wants to have sexual relations with her. He is aware that birth control is an important thing to consider. He decides to visit the local clinic to get information on the different methods available.

Pat's parents have always been very open about the fact that she was adopted. Pat loves her family very much but has decided that she would like information about her biological parents. Pat's adoptive mom and dad are not happy about this and are refusing to allow Pat to pursue her search. Pat says she has the right to this information.

Chris has always been interested in the military. He has recently decided that he would like to subscribe to Soldier of Fortune magazine. His parents are not happy about this and have told Chris he is not allowed to have a subscription. Chris says that it is his right to receive this type of magazine if he wants.

Association and Peaceful Assembly (Autonomy)

Chris has a friend that her parents don't like. They are telling Chris that she has to stop seeing this person. Chris is refusing and says she has the right to choose her friends.

Lesley has been talking to someone on the Internet and has decided to set up a meeting with her. Lesley's parents are upset and have said that they will not allow him to meet with this person. Lesley says he has the right to associate with this person if he wants.

Danny has decided to join a club. Her parents do not like the people who are members of this club and have forbidden Danny to do this. Danny says she has the right to associate with whomever she wants.

Access to Media in all its Forms (Autonomy)

Pat has been going on the Internet to a site where people are talking about cults. Her parents have found out and are upset. They want her to stop. Pat says she has the right to continue.

Kelly says that rating system for violence on TV is wrong and that she has the right to view anything that's on. Her parents say that the rating system is there for a good reason and that there are many things on TV that are not suitable for a child. Kelly says she has the right to watch what she wants.

Danielle likes to listen to heavy metal music but her parents find the lyrics violent and sexually explicit. They have told Danielle that she must no longer listen to this music but Danielle says she has the right to listen to what she wants.

Express an Opinion and Have it Listened To (Autonomy)

Pat's parents want her to attend the same private school that her mother and grandmother did. Pat doesn't want to and prefers to go to the local public school her friends are attending. Her parents are refusing to consider her thoughts but Pat says she has the right to express her opinion and that they have to listen to her.

Jean has had her eyebrow pierced. Her parents are very upset and concerned about infection. They are also concerned about what people will think of Jean. They want her to remove the ring and let her eyebrow heal. Jean is refusing and says that she has the right to express herself in this fashion.

Chris got a tattoo on her shoulder. Her parents are angry and can't understand why Chris would do this. They want Chris to have it removed. Chris says that it is a form of expression and she has the right to express herself this way.

Abuse (Protection)

Pat's parents have sometimes slapped Pat and his brother if they were bad. Pat has never liked being punished in this way and has told his parents that slapping is wrong.
His parents say that they don't intend to change their method of discipline even though Pat has told them he has the right not to be slapped.